

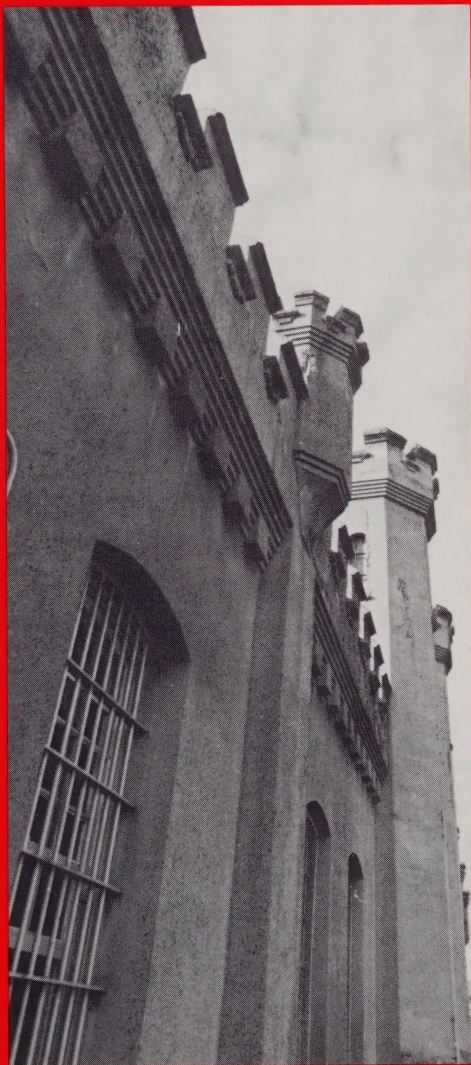
PRISON JOURNAL

Double Issue

Numbers 9/10

1992

THE INTERNATIONAL PRISONER





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025 with funding from
University of Toronto

19

PRISON JOURNAL

Double Issue •

Numbers 9/10 •

1992

THE INTERNATIONAL PRISONER

*He who speaks, he who writes is above all one who
speaks on behalf of all those who have no voice.*

Victor Serge

TOM ELTON Editors
ERLE G. MACAULAY

ERLING CHRISTENSEN Editorial Collective
MICHEL GASTONGUAY
WAYNE KNIGHTS
GLEN MCDUGALL
DEBRA MACKENZIE-ROSE

LES MERSON Managing Editors
HENDRIK HOEKEMA
JACQUELINE HOLLER

ROY ANEY Editorial Assistants
SARA IWAASA

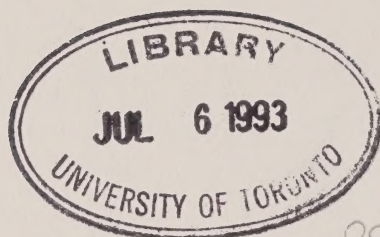
STEPHEN DUGUID Executive Editor

CENTRE OF CRIMINOLOGY

AUG -

LIBRARY.

INSTITUTE FOR THE HUMANITIES
Simon Fraser University



PS
8235
P7P75
no. 9/10

Typeset and Design: Les Merson
Cover Design: Les Merson & Carol Knight
Cover Photo: Drjulja

Printed and bound by Kromar Printing, Winnipeg, Canada, using vegetable inks on recycled text and cover paper.



ISSN 0827-553X

© 1992 for the authors by *Prison Journal*. All rights reserved.

The Institute for the Humanities acknowledges support for its programs received through the J.S. Woodsworth Endowment Fund and The Simons Foundation.

The Simon Fraser University Publications Committee is thanked for its contribution to the production of this issue of Prison Journal.

EDITORIALS

TOM ELTON (Canada)	vii
ERLE G. MACAULAY (Canada)	viii

FICTION

BOB ANDREWS (Canada)	Young Offender	32
CARMEN RODRIGUEZ (Chile/Canada)	The Mirror	98
MARIANNE PAUL (Canada)	Nuclear Winter	116
BOB ANDREWS (Canada)	Grave Site	136

POETRY

DUO DUO (China)	Process	5
	Residents	6
KIM CHI-HA (Korea)	From <i>Padi Field of Stars</i>	15
PAUL DAVIES (England)	Farewell, Farewell	25
	The Gun	25
JOHN HEIBNER (England)	Parkhurst Hospital New Year 1979	26
	1980 Parkhurst Prison	27
DAVID MARTIN (England)	Heartbreak Winter's	
	Withered Leaves	28
THICH TUE SY (Vietnam)	From <i>Prison Poems</i>	48
ANONYMOUS (France)	A Letter	56
	Twelve Square Metres	57
JOE CHESTER (Canada)	On Roller Skates	60
	Midnight	61
	Bonne Nuit	62
	You Take My Breath Away	63
	Baby I'm Blind	64
PETE GOSAU (Canada)	Two Shadows in the Night	71
CARMEN RODRIGUEZ (Chile/Canada)	Original Language	94
	Protracted War	95
	Working-Class Chilean Kid	96
TOM ELTON (Canada)	From <i>The Trails of Billy Miner</i>	112
DORIN TUDORIN (Romania/USA)	Two Canines	124
J.P. LLOYD (Ireland)	Goodnight, Jane, Goodnight	141
	The Soldiers Came	142

KENT/FERNDALDE READERS AND WRITERS COOPERATIVE (Canada)	Through a Panopticon, Lightly	151
--	-------------------------------	-----

NON-FICTION

ERLE G. MACAULAY (Canada)	Kropotkin and Other Rebels: Prisons Then and Now 1
DUO DUO (China)	From <i>The Man in the Cage:</i> <i>China as It Really Is</i> 4
	Fear 7
	Fear, I Fear Being Hungry 9
THOMAS SHAND (Canada)	Challenge 11
TOM ELTON (Canada)	Disappeared 18
DEBRA MACKENZIE-ROSE (Canada)	Crisis Maintenance: A Necessary Condition? 22
GAYLE HORII (Canada)	Choice: Will, Election, Option, Discretion, Alternative, Voice 42
JOHN ABBOT (Canada)	The Best Hotel in Southeast Asia 50
DALLAS WILLIAMS (Canada)	Mine to Mall 58
DICK BIRD (Canada)	Pura Vida 65
WAYNE KNIGHTS (Canada)	Culture in the Bureaucracy: University in Prison 73
TOM MCGAULEY & JACK MCINTOSH (Canada)	The <i>Via Dolorosa</i> of Vladimir Meier 102
PAVEL CAMPEANU (Romania)	From The Revolt of the Romanians 143
ADOLFO PEREZ ESQUIVEL (Argentina)	The Processes of Democratization in Latin America 144

PHOTO ESSAY

DRJULJA (Russia/Canada)	The Gulag and Frasersview Park 87
-------------------------	-----------------------------------

INTERVIEW

GINA RAHMAN (Canada)	The Peak Interview at Matsqui Institution 130
----------------------	--

REVIEWS

TOM ELTON (Canada)	Ioan Davies <i>Writers in Prison</i> 161
DEBRA-MACKENZIE-ROSE (Canada)	Jean Genet. <i>The Thief's Journal</i> 163
DOUG STEWART (Canada)	Brian Fawcett. <i>Public Eye</i> 166
ERLE MACAULAY (Canada)	Stephen Duguid, ed. <i>Yearbook of Correctional Education 1990</i> 168
WAYNE KNIGHTS (Canada)	P.J. Murphy. <i>Reconstructing Beckett</i> 172

LETTERS

JEFFREY M. EASTWOOD, DONALD C. JOHNSON, UMMA DUMMA (USA)
181

RESOURCES

Opportunities for Progress behind the Walls 174
Political Prisoners: Case Studies 178
News on News 184

CONTRIBUTORS

186

Acknowledgements

CATHERINE COAKLEY	Cork Prison, Ireland
MONA FERTIG	<i>(m)other tongues</i>
JOHN HARDING	Hampshire Probation Service, England
CAROL KNIGHT	Simon Fraser University
TOM MORRIS	<i>Amnesty International</i> (Ottawa)
DR. P.J. MURPHY	Cariboo College
MARJAN EHSASSI	<i>International PEN</i> Canadian Centre (English Speaking)
JERALD ZASLOVE	Simon Fraser University

EDITORIAL

Amnesty International divides torture into two categories: hard and soft. Hard torture is that which is directed against the physical self: electric shock, beatings, starvation, etc. Soft torture is directed against the psychological self: sensory deprivation, alienation and isolation, fear, etc. Some of the authors included in this issue of *Prison Journal* have had to suffer these forms of brutality.

While the physical or psychological maltreatment of prisoners is not the focus of this *Prison Journal* issue, inhumane treatment is something which cannot be ignored. Silence is the name of the man wielding the cattle-prod. By becoming literate, by creating a voice to speak out against institutionalized violence, we make the invisible visible. Hopefully, our efforts will help lessen that darkness.

Most Canadians hear about torture as something happening elsewhere: Asia, Latin America, the Middle East. Rarely is it reported as occurring in our own backyard. However, one need only consider the suicide rate within Canadian prisons to realize something wrong is happening here. Per capita, the suicide rate is 20 percent higher than that of non-incarcerated persons. While the taking of one's own life is an individual responsibility, conditions of incarceration leading to that end are the responsibility of the state.

Although limited by funds, access, and often defeatist attitudes, Canadian prisoners can seek recourse through the courts; recourse which prisoners in many countries do not have. Relief from brutalization, and sometimes death, often lies solely in the actions of groups such as Amnesty International and PEN, working worldwide to improve and protect the human rights of the incarcerated. Sometimes it is only the efforts of these and other groups that keep a person from being "disappeared."

The Canadian chapter of Writers In Prison Committee (PEN) concentrates on imprisoned writers—these persons are often held incommunicado, seldom allowed correspondence or visits. Hence, the "primary task in aiding most imprisoned writers is simply finding out what happened: the circumstances of the arrest, the politics of the country, the charges (if any), where the prisoner is being held and the whereabouts and condition of family members."

Amnesty International, representative of approximately thirty nations, focusses its activities mainly on "prisoners of conscience." It seeks the release of people detained because of colour, beliefs, gender, religion, etc. Two of AI's main concerns are the death penalty and torture or other cruel and inhumane treatment. AI stresses that it is "concerned solely with the protection of human rights. Regardless of the ideology of the governments or the beliefs of the victims involved."

Prison Journal's stated aim is to provide a forum for the collected voice of the incarcerated. With that voice we want to show that we "inside" are real, are human, and that we demand to be treated with dignity and respect. Only through the extension of respect and dignity can we end the tyranny and brutality allowed existence by silence and isolation. ♦

EDITORIAL

Prisons, worldwide, are the focal point for much societal conflict. How a society treats its prisoners—its enemies—reveals much about that society. In Canada prisons are relatively liberal and humane. Throughout Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe, and Central and South America, prisons are brutal and offer fatal experiences for the incarcerated. Citizens of the West point in admonishment toward “indoctrination camps,” “gulags,” and “mental institutions” in the “uncivilized” world. Yet they ignore the struggles of their own prisoners, citing only how “good” their prisons are compared to those elsewhere. “The gall of them!” is a typical attitude towards the “malcontented” prisoners clamouring for change. Ignorance perpetuates the most civilized and advanced nations’ ready use of imprisonment to control citizens. What these great thinkers ignore is the fact that all imprisonment is barbaric, inhumane, and defeatist.

This edition of *Prison Journal* offers the perspectives of prisoners from around the world. The disenfranchised of many nations have been selected to represent their situations. Regardless of country of origin, underlying themes appear throughout most of the work. Most authors describe or debate unjust and inequitable power relations. Whether student demonstrators from Tiananmen Square being “re-educated” in Chinese training centres, bank robbers being programmed in Canadian correctional facilities, or radicals having the evil communist tendencies tortured from them in Central America—the nature of their plight and the reaction to the state is the same.

Nations are political entities. They create laws that are political expressions. These laws are enforced by police who represent political instruments. Those breaking the laws are confined to prisons, which are political institutions. It follows that all prisoners are political, regardless of the labels that states attach to them. As political institutions, prisons are utilized to deal with conflict between the interests of the state and those of individuals. Some lawmakers are quick to point out that the situation is better than in the past, when torture, maiming, executions, and banishment were considered just remedies for societal ailments. While true, this rationalization is of little comfort to those suffering the current level of injustice.

When conflict occurs, it should be resolved by reason and with the intent of solving the conflict. While in liberal democracies the law emphasizes that citizens resolve conflict amongst themselves, the state holds and readily uses the ability to resort to coercion to resolve conflict. Unfortunately this does not work and, in fact, only generates greater problems. For conflict to be resolved, the grievances of both parties must be addressed equally. In a true democracy every person’s perspective is a valid perspective. If nation-states around the world are to mature and grow, they must address the dissent rising up against them. Not with tanks, bullets, and cages, but through dialogue and accommodation. This is change. To forestall change through repression and coercion only generates greater instability and dissent. If

being civilized means having the wisdom to learn and grow from our errors, we have a long way to travel.

Signs that we are at least beginning this journey are the international efforts of Amnesty International (AI), Writers in Prison Committee (PEN), and the North American Correctional Education Association (NACEA) and the ongoing efforts of the United Nations. Hope for the future can be found in newly formed organizations such as the International Centre for the Study of Education in Prison Systems (ICEPS), the Society for the Reform of Criminal Law, the International Centre for Criminal Law Reform and Criminal Justice Policy, and Penal Reform International (PRI). While these international organizations may be oriented towards specific dimensions of imprisonment, they all assist in exposing the true nature and consequences of imprisonment. Such activities will hopefully lead towards governments' rethinking the purpose and use of prison systems.

We hope that efforts such as *Prison Journal* will illuminate prisoners' perspectives and experiences, and those of their supporters and families, so that such will be considered by those trying to come to grips with the failures of prisons internationally. Whether these opinions and expressions are considered to be accurate, realistic, valid or just, they are real. And as such, they must be addressed before resolution can come about between states and their dissenters. ♦

KROPOTKIN AND OTHER REBELS: PRISONS THEN AND NOW

Today, the State has succeeded in meddling in every aspect of our lives. From the cradle to the tomb, it strangles us in its arms. Sometimes as the central government, sometimes as the the provincial or local State, now as the commune-State, it pursues us at each step, it appears at every street corner, it imposes on us, holds us, harasses us.

It regulates all our actions. It accumulates mountains of laws and ordinances in which the shrewdest lawyer is lost. Each day it creates new gears to awkwardly patch up the broken old watch, and it comes to create a machine so complex, so inferior, so obstructive, that it revolts even those who are in charge of running it.

It creates an army of employees, spiders with hooked fingers, who know the universe only through the dirty windows of their offices, or by their obscure, absurd, illegible old papers, an evil band who have only one religion, that of the buck, only one care, that of hooking up with any party whatever in order to be guaranteed maximum political appointments for a minimum of work.

The results we know only too well.

(Peter Kropotkin—"Words of a Rebel," 1885)

These words I ran across the other night struck home an interesting, albeit horrific note of familiarity with the existing system of imprisonment in Canada. While the author spoke of the totalitarianistic Tsarists of pre-revolutionary Russia, many of the offensive components that outraged this self-defined rebel lurk throughout Canada's "correctional" system. The CSC has often been accused of being unconscious of the fact that it is no less totalitarian than the worst of the Stalinists. Poor Peter would have cringed at the level of sophistication and pride that the CSC displays in regards to the level of control it is able to impose upon prisoners in their keep; all in the name of justice and security.

It is sadly evident that the CSC ignores the historical evidence which provides that those people who are super-repressed will rebel more often than conform, and that producing rebellious ex-prisoners does nothing to protect the public. One friend recently suggested that if but a small percentage of the energy and resources put towards coercive control and "covering thy butt" was put towards the reintegration of prisoners into society, the prisons would surely be empty by now. I share in his dismay over the fact that the punitive and rehabilitative models operating at present within the CSC only serve to assist in the creation of a very bitter and vengeful group of social invalids. And I, like him, and the millions of people from Lithuania to Oka, wait impatiently for equality, justice, and freedom. Let us hope, for our children's sake, that the 1990s will see political reform in the West—as well as the East!

Prisoners like myself wonder how many more years will pass before someone will recognize the truth in Kropotkin's words, particularly when he stated that,

There is only one answer to the question "What can be done to better this penal system?" Nothing. A prison can not be improved. With the exception of a few unimportant little improvements, there is absolutely nothing to do but demolish it.
(Peter Kropotkin, 1887)

While we have come a long way from the paddle, the silent system and other overtly sadistic "techniques of behavioral manipulation and coercive control," the "demolition" of prisons is occurring at a murderously slow rate. The forces at play, namely, fear, greed, apathy, vindictiveness and a perverse sense of justice, insure that the system of imprisonment will continue in essence for a long time to come. Kropotkin described a truth that seems to transgress the nationalistic and ideological differences between pre-revolutionary Russia and that which exists in contemporary Canada; the truth that has allowed for the perpetuation of a truly evil system. So long as the interests of those calling the shots are served by the present system, it will continue to exist. All logic and common sense aside. This is war.

How often have prisoners been heard to say: "It's the big thieves who are holding us here; we are the little ones." Who can dispute this when he knows the incredible swindles perpetrated in the realm of high finance and commerce; when he knows that the thirst for riches, accrued by every possible means, is the very essence of bourgeois society; when he has discovered the immense number of suspicious transactions between honest men (according to bourgeois standards) and criminals. When he has seen all this he must be convinced that jails are made for the unskillful, not for criminals.

(Peter Kropotkin, 1877)

Criminals and prisons in Canada serve some very real interests. Those who control the flow of information have a vested interest in assuring that it's the other guy that gets the "heat." It is well known that those who control the information reaching the public also control the corporations that are polluting the environment, killing workers through negligence, and pilfering the purses of every citizen in Canada. This explains how a petty thief can get five years, imprisonment, while a corporation guilty of murder, destruction, and mega-scale thefts receives only small fines.

It is hard to notice high-level deceit and thievery when the six o'clock news screams of the threats everyone faces from drugs and street crimes. The fact that more people are killed, more money is stolen, and more lives are destroyed at the hands of those controlling the economy seems to escape us. But what of justice and the law? What indeed!

If you are a member of the propertied class, you can crawl out of anything you want to, for the law is for sale; that is to say, whoever can purchase the lawyers, stock the jury, and bribe the court can win. There is only one law for the poor, to wit: Obey the rich.

Every great robbery that was ever perpetrated upon a people has been by virtue of and in the name of law.

(Albert Parson, on being sentenced to hang, 1886)

But waiting for the rulers and their peon administrators to become interested in our plight, to come clean and serve the true needs and interests of our country, is a waste of time. Prisoners will only receive the slightest measure of improvement if we continue to struggle in a manner which will align our interests with those of the general public. By opening up the doors of prisons, and opening up the eyelids of the public to see into them, past the rhetoric and sensationalism, we may achieve some measure of resolve. Resolve being not pity, nor welfare, but real personal empowerment through training and opportunities. Not to mention providing true justice equally for all Canadians. It must be those who suffer the weight of this society's decadence that initiate the change. The will is lacking everywhere else; and this will continue to be the case. In the end we are as much responsible for the existence of the present disorder as are those who feed off our souls, citizens and prisoners alike.

Be it never forgotten that the cure for evil and disorder is more liberty, not suppression.

(Alexander Berkman, 1928)

Our prisons are a reflection of our whole life under the present regime; and they will remain what they are now until the whole system of government and the whole of our life have undergone a thorough change.

(Peter Kropotkin, in *Russian and French Prisons*, 1887)

A society that is based on a set of well-defined and restrictive rules so that being a man becomes synonymous with obeying these rules, forces the dissenter into a no-man's land of no rules at all and thus robs him of his reason and his humanity.

(Paul K. Feyerabend, 1975) ❖

The tremendous changes/stagnation that China is going through are reflected in the essays and poems by Duo Duo in the selection that follows. Duo Duo is a well-known and honoured Chinese journalist and poet (being awarded the prestigious "Jinxing Prize for Literature"). He was also a member of the democracy movement who was present on June 4, 1989 in Tiananmen Square when the tanks attacked. In possession of an exit visa which made it possible for him to leave China, he has been living in exile in England and in Canada since then. The essays in this selection from his writing deal with what he sees as the deeper rooted causes of the failure of the democratic forces to prevail in China, in contrast to Eastern Europe, and recently, the Soviet Union, where the authoritarian communist regimes have been routed. One may accept or reject his analysis of the class balance and forces in China, but what strikes one is that the central metaphor of his book on the crushing of the democratic movement in China (The Man in the Cage) is one of the prisoner in duress. Duo Duo has never been imprisoned, but he evokes a universal understanding of the degradation of imprisonment that puts the Chinese events into a global context.

Glen R. McDougall

FROM THE MAN IN THE CAGE: CHINA AS IT REALLY IS
(Der Mann im Käfig. China, wie es wirklich ist)

My friends and I ate, drank and talked.

Obviously, we discussed the most important question: how long can the situation in China last? One said two, another twenty years. The third felt at most two months. I argued that something happened in China that had shaken the world and no one anticipated it. This would occur again but at a time when no one expected it.

"When then?"

"Only heaven knows."

"Only heaven knows" could have been from Mao Zedong's last testament, which he dictated before his death, about the future political development of China. Naturally, during his life, Mao had made other forecasts, such as that cultural revolutions will be repeated every seven or eight years. Unfortunately, this prediction was apparently confirmed; the result was renewed battles. Backward and modern culture squared off. An intellectually impoverished army and a peasant mass in the same situation formed the foundation of this regime. Intellectuals were always only a "handful." This Communist Party is a party of the traditional peasantry. Its hatred of intellectuals is hereditary. The Communist Party oppressed not only the apolitical intellectuals, but also intellectuals who were party loyalists. They tried to make peasants out of the intellectuals. The culture of the Communist Party is thus a culture of degeneration, which tries to prop up an intellectually backward social majority.

I told my friends a true story: a dangerous criminal was held in a prison in the Chinese Province of Shanxi. Several times he had tried to escape, but he was recap-

tured each time. To punish him, he was confined to a one-cubic-metre cage in which he could neither stand up nor stretch out. Each day he received water and something to eat. Ceaselessly he screamed at the soldiers who guarded him: "Kill me! Let me die!" As the soldiers stared at his crazed and contorted face, they were afraid to open the cage any more and let him have anything else. And none dared to shoot him. So he was held in this cramped cage every day receiving his food and water. His anguish did not stop. I can easily imagine that to this day this man is still in his cage and still screams "Won't you let me die?" But he is not allowed to die. He has to remain alive to be tormented.

I am firmly convinced that this man mirrors the living soul of the spiritual backwardness of China's society.

(Translated from German by G. McDougall)

PROCESS

A ripe persimmon, falling in mid-air
A rusty pear, already fallen to earth
Orange peel on the ground, long since picked up bit by bit
They left you over

Just such a process

Before you dream, you arrived there
Before you, there are those who have long since returned from there
Before you people, even more people who have not yet set out
You follow them

Just such a process

You cover your face with your hands, hands degenerated into gloves
The gloves preserve the fingernails, firmly grasping the leg's flesh
You walk towards life—maybe attain a prolonged course
Another step forward, you happen on a piss-pond

You conclude this process.

RESIDENTS

When they drink beer in the depths of the sky, then we kiss
When they sing, we turn off the light
When we fall asleep, on silver-painted toenails
They walk into our dream, while we await the dream's end

They have long since formed a river

In timeless sleep
They shave, then we hear the sound of strings
They paddle their oars, then the world stops turning
They don't paddle, the don't paddle

Then we have no chance of awakening

In sleepless time
They wave to us, we wave to the children
When children wave to children
Stars awake from a distant hotel

All who feel pain will awaken

The beer they drink has long since flowed back to the ocean
Those children walking on the surface of the sea
All received their blessing: flowing
Flowing, is but the river's yielding

With secretly shed tears, we formed a river...

FEAR

Fear is the title of a poem I wrote in 1983.

Its first words are, "Oh fear, I fear/ What?" Since the International Poetry Festival in Rotterdam I have recited this poem many times. The last recital of the Festival took place in a theater in Asenn. Under the lantern-light of the new moon, in front of four hundred people, I went up to the stage, placed my copy of the poems on the lectern and began to read. Everything was going fine, and I felt very confident. I had read two poems and we had come to the translation of the second poem. The translator left the stage, leaving me alone to read in Chinese.

As I was reading the words, "I fear—this is possible./ This is possible," I raised my eyes to look at the audience, while casually turning the page of the book. I looked back to the book and was confronted by an empty space. Instantly, I remembered that it was not my own copy, and that part of the book I was holding had been torn out to make further copies for someone else.

"This is possible."

I started again. There was nothing but an expanse of emptiness before my eyes, an entirely wordless emptiness.

"Oh fear, I fear/ I fear what?"

I lifted my eyes, and looked at the audience. I was asking them.

Finally, I read, "Yes, you no longer fear," four times. Loud applause. Sweating, I bowed to the audience.

A beautiful mistake.

It made me recall that in England and Holland, the journalists' most common question had been, "What were your feelings in Tiananmen Square before dawn on June 4th—weren't you afraid?" My answer had been no. I had felt shock and anger, but certainly not fear.

"So, according to what you say," the journalists went on, "when they turned their machine guns on the crowds, though people began to fall to the ground and some thousands turned to flee, not everyone left the Avenue of Eternal Peace, and whenever the sound of gunfire stopped, newcomers gathered to shout at the soldiers... until the next bursts of gunfire. You say you head five bursts altogether. Would you say that you and other people there showed bravery?"

"No," I answered, "my feelings then had absolutely nothing to do with bravery..."

"I was simply no longer afraid."

The night of the 20th of May was also a night of terror in Beijing. It was the first night after martial law was passed, the night that the soldiers began to prepare their arms and entered the outskirts of Beijing. Along with thousands of other Beijing citizens, I stayed put on the Avenue of Eternal Peace. I myself was standing in front of the Ministry of Public Security when suddenly we heard people shouting, "They are coming!" Instantly, in one enormous wave, the crowd surged towards the shouting—"They are coming!"—not away from it in fright.

It was at this precise moment that I said to myself, "Yes, you no longer fear."

When I first saw the Goddess of Democracy standing in front of Tiananmen, raising her torch aloft, I wept and said to this symbol of freedom, "Yes, you no longer fear."

Why not fear?

Because, I think, in the past month, since the democracy movement began, we have experienced a kind of freedom.

Revolution is a festival for people who are living under an autocratic regime. We celebrated such a festival every day for more than a month.

Recently, I went to a small town near Rotterdam where some young people were riding around the streets on their motorbikes. I asked them what they were doing and they said they were bored and looking for excitement. I realized ever since that April 17th the people of Beijing had suddenly began to live in a new way, and the most striking thing was that that was what living was all about. A number of young people in Beijing who rode their motorbikes around just like those near Rotterdam will now have been shot, simply because they believed that those who are living must not be afraid. The people of Beijing have celebrated a festival, and while it lasted only a short time, we felt that every day was worth twenty years of life.

In the midst of the brutal massacre that began at dawn on June 4th, I believed that the people around me had the same feeling, "We have truly lived. Now, anything is possible."

And, in the faces of those who had been shot, I saw a similar calm and composure. I didn't hear any cries of terror. They knew they had not lived in vain. This is not just a question of bravery. It is first and foremost a question of values.

My translator asked me, "Duo Duo, why not change, 'Oh fear, I fear' to 'Oh, don't fear, I don't fear'?"

I think I can answer him with words now, even more commonly heard in Beijing:

"So long as the people of China are not afraid of living, why should they fear death?"

FEAR, I FEAR BEING HUNGRY

During the poetry festival, no matter whether it was breakfast, lunch or dinner, I always said, "I'm not hungry," but I was always eating.

Friends said to me, "so you're still not hungry?" and I replied, "...I'm afraid—I'm afraid of hunger." This made me recall a poem of the French poet, Éluard, which reads roughly like this:

"What is your name, child?"
—I'm eating.
"Are you going home, child?"
—I'm eating.
"What are you playing, child?"
—I'm eating.

When I was working as a journalist in Beijing, I once thought of doing an article with the title: "Reflections on 400 kilos of grain."

The average yearly intake of grain per person in China is currently 400 kilos. By the year 2000, despite a great deal of agricultural development, the average per capita intake will still be 400 kilos. Increases in grain production are cancelled out by growth in population.

And of course, most of China's population is farmers.

"So, may I ask..." the journalist then proceeds, "Do China's farmers, who live mostly in the remote countryside, care about the massacre in Beijing? Do they understand what it was really about? Do they want democracy?"

The simplest answer would be: "Farmers only care about their own income, they don't care about anything else."

And this simple answer is enough in itself.

We are already aware of many of the crises China faces: in the supply of raw materials; growth of population; the mortality rate; the political system; culture. Their solution needs time, but an autocratic political system can only make things worse.

The first to be affected are the farmers.

When I was sent to live in the countryside, aged sixteen, one of the most memorable things said to me by a farmer was, "Why do you city people clean your teeth every day? I never clean my teeth, but what I eat tastes just as good to me as it does for you!"

I went to the countryside to be re-educated, and to listen to the farmers recalling the hardships of the past. But the greatest hardships the farmers remembered began in 1958. Someone died of hunger every day in the village where I lived.

Then why don't the farmers care about the Beijing massacre of June 4th?

Because, in fact, the massacre started thirty years ago. Twenty million farmers died of hunger in 1959. According to investigative results, more than 200,000 starved to death. But some of the materials they discovered were never published: people were eaten at that time; the living ate the dead, the half-dead, and the living.

Because of this, I recall a scene at a school in the south of China during the Cultural Revolution.

A fire was burning in the sportsground, and a big pot of boiling water hung over the fire. Young students stood around it. The headmaster was bound, dragged to the spot, and a knife was passed to each student in turn. Each one cut a slice of flesh from the headmaster's body, put in the pot to boil for a moment and then ate it before handing the knife to the next student. So they continued until the cries of the headmaster stopped...

People starved to death in 1959 because of natural disasters, but farmers told me that the village cadres never dared to shit where the farmers did, because the colour of their shit wasn't the same. The farmers ate wild plants, grass, and bark; the cadres ate the farmers' meat, rice, and plain noodles.

And today, how do farmers and cadres get on?

In the Hulan county in Heilongjiang province, there is already a terrorist organization which has set out specifically to assassinate corrupt cadres. According to hearsay, they have already killed more than forty people, and, what is more, they have been protected by local farmers. The authorities are a long way from tracking them down. The relationship between farmers and cadres is, in fact, far worse than that between the students and the government. The corruption of local cadres in the countryside is worse than it has ever been in China.

It is possible that the farmers are not entirely clear about the massacre in Beijing, but it is enough for peasants to be concerned about what happens in their own lives.

After investment in capital construction was reduced and industry's prospects looked bleak, 20 million peasants who came to the cities in search of work found themselves unemployed. Returning to their villages wasn't the solution. The purchase price of grain was unreasonably high, and the price of materials for production had also risen enormously, so that it wasn't worthwhile for farmers to cultivate grain. In Jiangxi province alone, 450,000 farmers gave up agriculture and went to the towns in search of a livelihood. Large tracts of land were abandoned. The economic crisis intensifies the political crisis. Although the farmers may not know that this government killed thousands of students, workers and citizens on June 4th, they know that it is the same government that, thirty years ago, starved 20 million peasants to death.

I remember that when I was in Sichuan province I took a photograph of an ox. It was standing facing the camera and beside it, on the ground, was an indistinct bloody heap: the guts of another ox that had just been killed and dismembered. Oxen are fierce and strong. If you only take one at a time to slaughter, they become wild and uncontrollable, because they realize that you mean them harm. But if you cull two at once, the one you want to butcher will be calm. So every time you want to slaughter one ox, you have to get hold of two. You then kill one, binding up the other as if to kill it also. And as you slaughter the one, the other will be watching by its side.

I clearly remember the eyes of that ox staring into the camera... ❖

(Translated by Gregory B. Lee)

CHALLENGE

The following is a statement read to the court at New Westminster, BC on April 25th, 1977, by Thomas Mason Shand, prior to his sentencing for taking part in a hostage-taking incident at British Columbia Penitentiary. The statement was part of a much larger disturbance/riot in the penitentiary during which one wing was taken over by the prisoners.

MR SHAND: Your Honour, I should like to read a statement that I prepared and I should hope that the court would understand that I am not referring to this courtroom or to any individual in this courtroom, that I am talking when I talk of courts across Canada. These are my own personal feelings and I hope that they won't have any effect on the sentencing of these other individuals. I am saying something that I think has to be said. I would hate to see someone else persecuted for what I said. I have made this statement myself, I have had no help in the preparation. It's my statement. If it's all right with Your Honour I should like to go ahead with it.

THE COURT: Surely.

MR SHAND: I have pled guilty to all of these charges after spending seven months in solitary confinement. I have come to realize the futility of preparing a proper defence against the charges laid. If I thought I stood even a slight marginal chance of receiving a fair and impartial trial, I would take this case to high court. But as other inmates before me have found out all they can expect and receive from the courts of this land is ridicule and degradation.

Here I stand before this court chained like some wild beast, with a heavy guard around me to emphasize my alleged dangerousness. One can only wonder for whose benefit all this show of security is. I can assure the court it certainly doesn't benefit us, the accused. I should like to ask you, sir, how can any judge or jury ever be expected to believe any defence we may have put forward with this ominous cloud cast over us. We stand before the court depicted as animals not capable of functioning in any other way than the way you have portrayed us here. How can anyone ever give us the benefit of the doubt when the courts have gone to such great extent to take any doubt away from us that there may have been?

I am going to try to explain to the court how all of this came about even though I know you have made up your minds as to what happened and what kind of people we are. Truth no longer enters into this case: if it did, others would be standing here beside us. They would not be inmates; they would be penitentiary officials charged with inciting to riot and conspiracy. But as we have seen from other court actions this will never happen because the sacred white horse must be protected at all costs. I should like now to try and explain to the court why we had to resort to taking hostages.

As most of you know by now the riot was simmering for the better part of three days before it became full-scale. In this three days prior to the major riot not one thing was done by the administration to curb the impending riot or to alleviate the tensions that then existed. The only party trying to get things back to an even keel was the inmate committee who were met with opposition and open hostility by the administration at every turn. On the subsequent day of the riot we were working in the kitchen while a full-scale riot was in process in the East Wing. It had been going full blast for some two hours. I still to this day do not understand why we were permitted to be out of our cells when such an explosive situation existed. One can only conclude that the administration wanted the ensuing events to take place. We were made to understand that custody was in the process of getting ready to rush the East Wing with tear gas and clubs to subdue the rioters. We knew there was also the possibility of great loss of life to our brothers because many of them were quite prepared to die for their cause. There was no doubt in our minds as to the seriousness of the situation. Things had deteriorated too far to hope for a peaceful settlement, so when we were asked to take hostages, we did because it was the only thing left to do. We then took eight or nine hostages, thereby calling a Mexican standoff. I should like to state here and now that at no time during the 27 hours xxxxxx was held or the 81 hours imposed on yyyy was either one subjected to ridicule, physical abuse, or idle threats. They were treated as best as the situation allowed and every precaution was taken to ensure their welfare and safety. Another myth I should like to try and dispel is that contrary to popular belief by the prison administration and the committee investigating prison violence that the inmates did in fact everything in their power to stop the riot and hostage taking long before they were ever conceived. All their pleas and requests fell on deaf ears from the Solicitor-General's office right on down the line.

It is my opinion that had the committee acted in any other way than they did there would most certainly have been some loss of life and they would have been derelict in their functions and duties as elected members for the inmate population. There has been much ado made of the hostage takers and the rioters and virtually nothing is said of the hostage makers and riot creators, which can only be compared to cattle being blamed for stampeding and the cause of the stampede being left unchecked so that there may be other stampedes.

The Solicitor-General's component of the Public Service Alliance association has such overwhelming power that they are able to create a disturbance or a hostage taking in any maximum-security penitentiary in Canada at any time they desire. They can and have done this many times in the past and will continue to do so in the future unless drastic measures are taken to curb their awesome power. They are able to create incidents to justify higher pay and tighter security measures. What they are in fact doing is asking for a twenty-four-hour-a-day lockup for all prisoners in maximum-security institutions, thereby eliminating all the dangers to themselves. And at the same time asking for high-risk pay when there is no longer a risk factor involved. All this is done at the expense of the inmates who are manipulated into situations and the public who must bear the brunt of this form of blackmail where the hidden message is: "give us what we want, or we will set the animals free."

It is fantastic when you consider that just seventeen years ago it cost the Canadian taxpayers \$27 million to run the prison system which today costs ten

times that amount. With what result? Is the crime rate down? No! Are related training programmes improved? No! As a matter of fact they have disappeared for the greater part in our maximum-security institutions, leaving a large part of the population idle. The only winners in today's prisons are the guards who get higher pay and the outside contractors who build more slaughterhouses. The losers are you the public who get nothing in return for your investment and inmates who will one day be coming back to your society to thank you for all that you have done for them. They will probably be so thankful that the next time you send them back for a trade and psychiatric treatment they will probably try to kill you to prevent you from doing so.

It is my honest opinion that each and every one of you knows the injustices that are committed against the inmates in your prisons. I include the more than one hundred deaths which occurred in the last five years in the federal prisons, of which more than eighty have been attributed to suicide. But you know better than I do, nothing has been done to seek out the real reasons for these deaths or the perpetrators who committed them. Yet you sit back and wonder why there is no longer respect for the laws of the courts, and the people who make the laws of Canada are more criminal than the people they send off to prison. You have powers and authority collectively to do something about the deplorable conditions which exist in our prison system. You have created a mammoth monster which you no longer have control over.

All I am able to say in my defence is that had there been a more peaceful way to bring about the cessation of hostility we would have tried that way first. When inmates in prison can no longer negotiate peacefully to have their complaints and grievances heard by Ottawa and the public, then they will do it violently because they know you understand violence. Sometimes we are forced into situations which we do not necessarily want to participate in but the circumstances surrounding that situation give us little or no choice but to participate. Thank you sir.

THE COURT: Thank you Mr. Shand. ♦



On 30 January 1990, dissident artist Hong Song-dam was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment for sending photographic slides of one of his paintings and some political magazines to North Korea. This is the maximum sentence provided under Article 7 of the National Security Law, which prohibits the production and distribution of "documents, drawings, or any other means of expression" which "praise, benefit or encourage" North Korea.

Source: Amnesty International bulletin, February 1990.

DRY LIGHTNING

No one around.
Sitting. Waiting.

Wasn't like this in the
old days.
Now, I hear time passing.

From the top of Bee-Nuh mountain
I ought to sink my teeth into the moon
over the white Young river.

When was it I stole the stars;
when was that time,
crying for freedom among the masses?
When was that time?

Though the wide earth is my home,
I am without a resting place,
and strips of wind blow through my heart.

Beyond, far off,
dry lightning strikes
then again,

Again and again.

REOCCURRENCE

The magnolia blossoms;
its whiteness slowly envelops
the sky.

Torn by wind, one petal at a time,
its flowers return
to earth.

Gone, the days of my youth,
my friends who shot out sparks
leaving only the short trace of
blindness,
this way or that;
to America, Europe, in ones or twos
to prison
or the other world.

All gone.

Inside this darkened stump sprouting
only worry and longing,
these winter days I yearn for a dense,
leafy season.

SHORTCUTS

I could leave this road of suffering,
and I want to leave it
though I must finish the journey
to faint applause,
jet black at the bottom of my mind.

With awkward step the road progresses,
past sideroads, shortcuts
and I pause to think.

Where the road is cut
there is but one path:

No desires.

No shortcuts. ❖

from *Padi Field of Stars*
(Translated by T. Carolan and K. Kwangshik)

DISAPPEARED

Marlene Moore found Tom. She had awakened early one morning and gone for a walk with Jason, her poodle. Marlene and Jason (named after an ex-boyfriend) usually hiked the trails threading Lake Cowichan's old-growth forest.

It was actually Jason that discovered Tom. Marlene didn't understand, at first, what he was doing. Usually he was feet ahead, checking out the terrain, but on that day she suddenly realized he wasn't with her. When she turned to look she spotted him pacing back and forth along a short stretch of the trail. His snout was up, snagging scents, and he was whining. Her calls for him to heel were ignored. She wondered what was going on.

On one side of the path grew thick brush. On the other rose a steep thirty-foot slope. At the top of the slope grew an aged garry oak, its branches reaching out over the cliff. From a thick branch hung a rope. From that rope hung Tom. His body turned slowly with the spring breeze. Marlene gathered her wits, collected Jason, and returned home. Then she phoned the police.

When police secured the scene they found a backpack at the oak's foot. On top of the pack was a windbreaker, neatly folded. And on top of that sat a cyclist's helmet. Going back to the trail's entrance they found a ten-speed bike. It was propped against a post that supported a map of the area's trails. It was all very neat. All the indicators pointed to suicide.

Within days, without family authorization, Tom's body was cremated. A police communiqué was issued stating no inquest would be held. A few days later Tom's wife received his ashes and personal effects. It was then that friends and family began to demand answers. How did he get there? Was it suicide, or murder? And if murder, was it by the criminal elements he had known, or was it a police revenge killing?

Tom was born in North Bay, Ontario. On his sixteenth birthday he ran away to Calgary. Not much is known of his early years, except that he was the youngest of four. His father was an alcoholic and often beat him during drunken rages. Where his mother was or went is a mystery. She just disappeared, leaving Tom and his sisters to fend for themselves. Those were times of which Tom talked little.

Unskilled, barely literate, and fuelled by an anger that motivated most of his actions, Tom turned to crime. He made his living from B&Es, rolling drunks, selling soft drugs, and committing the odd robbery. It wasn't long before he became known to the police. And like others involved in street crime, he was occasionally arrested and had to serve time. For the most part, though, he was lucky, meaning none of his sentences were lengthy. He didn't actually hit the federal system until he was twenty-eight, three years after being sentenced to death for the murder of a policeman.

Tom claimed self-defence at his trial. Witnesses testified he'd spent most of the evening in the bar, drinking. He was alone when the police entered on a routine

round. Recognizing Tom, the two officers made their way to his table. Intoxicated, he began insulting them. They steered him out the back door and into an alley. After that there are only two stories.

The officials' version says that as soon as they got outside Tom started to fight. He pulled a knife, stabbing one officer in the chest and slashing the other's throat. As the slashed officer fell back, Tom bent over the officer he had stabbed in the chest, coming up with his service revolver. This he used to fire two shots into its owner's body. That man died instantly. The other was permanently paralyzed.

Tom's version was that he was just having a drink when the police roused him. He admitted mouthing it up, but said that wasn't unusual. From there the stories differ dramatically. Tom swore that as soon as they got outside the police threw him against the wall and began to beat him. When they saw that their punches weren't having any effect, one of the officers began to pistol-whip him. Not until then did Tom pull his knife from its sheath. The rest of the incident, he claimed, was lost to an alcohol blackout.

Tom fled, making his way back to North Bay. But the death of the policeman was national news, and so was Tom's face. It was his father who talked him into surrendering. But even then he had trouble. He called the local police station. The officer he talked to wanted no part of a cop killer, suggesting instead that Tom fly back to Calgary and surrender there. It was only Tom's threat of further violence that got the North Bay police to pick him up. A year and a half later he was sentenced to hang and held at the Fort Saskatchewan jail to await execution.

It was during his stay on death row that Tom came to terms with death. Unlike most, he knew how he was going to die and when. The fact he felt his conviction unjust and unfair mattered little. Mentally, he had lived his execution over and over. And he felt that if mental rehearsal prepared one for reality, he would meet his death with courage and dignity.

The one aspect of his execution that did bother him, however, was the knowledge that his body would void its contents at the crucial moment. There was no way around it; it was a natural process. The thought disgusted him. Once again though, Tom got lucky: a stay of execution was granted and his sentence was commuted to "life." He was then transferred to Alberta's Prince Albert penitentiary.

When Tom arrived in PA, he found the pen to be more hostile than he had ever imagined. Most of the prisoners were Native, either Blackfoot or Cree, and were constantly at war with one another. During times of uneasy tribal peace there was usually trouble between the Natives and whites. And if it happened prisoner wasn't fighting prisoner, there was always the continual battle against the guards to contend with. Tom walked into the middle of this with his new lease on life.

Because he was a cop-killer he was automatically given a certain amount of respect by his fellows. That alone, though, was not enough to guarantee survival in such a setting. But that, coupled with a strong self-awareness and gut courage, would usually get one through the most difficult of times. These latter traits Tom had.

Within five years he was elected to chair the prisoners' committee. Elected by popular vote, the committee presented prisoners' concerns to the administration and, when necessary, acted as mediators in troubled times. Time and again Tom interceded and ended internal wars. And, with the others' total support, he began to

press for improvements in the general living conditions. Although the monthly body count and incidents of violence began to drop, the authorities were not pleased.

In fact, the guards were becoming increasingly worried. Tom's control over the prison population was a threat to their own perceived control. With the prisoners at peace with one another, all of their attentions would be focussed directly on the prison staff. The guards' worst fears came to life just before lock-up on a Friday night.

Some of the prisoners were drunk on home brew and performing. The guards wanted the drunks placed in the segregation unit. But the population, three hundred of whom who were in the gym, said "No." They then refused to leave the gym. To keep a lid on things and keep the protesters pacified, the medical staff issued medication to any who wanted it. Some of the men saved their doses, thinking to get high. But they drank too much of the Chloralhydrate. Three men overdosed and died.

The deaths put an end to the sit-in. And the incident became the justification used by the administration to transfer Tom to BC. Other committee members were transferred elsewhere. With Tom and the rest of the committee gone, PA once again began to resemble a gladiatorial arena.

For administrative purposes the CSC divides the prison system into three regions: the Atlantic, the Prairies, and the Pacific. For those inside serving time the distinctiveness of each region is quite clear, culturally. Eastern prisoners are inclined to take crime more seriously, seeing it as a business and treating it as such. On the prairies, for the most part, those inside are there because of racial discrimination and disparity before the Court. And on the west coast, the majority are serving time because of drugs or drug-related crimes. Those transferred from one region to another suffer cultural dislocation. Tom was no exception.

It took him a while to settle in at the BC Pen, but he arrived with a reputation and was involved in routine prison politics from the start. Whenever his advice was sought it was given, freely. And if his special skills as a mediator were required they were extended, without question. It was at this time that he started to get annual reminders from Calgary.

The note and Christmas card arrived each year without fail. The card was always unsigned, and so too was the note. It informed him a room had been reserved, in his name, at Calgary's Holiday Inn. There was only one explanation: he figured neither he nor his crime was forgotten. He imagined it was the police, letting him know he was still very much in mind.

Three years after his arrival in the BC Pen, the prison erupted in a major riot. Again, home brews were involved. Two hundred fifty men destroyed the East Wing cellblock. Armed guards took up firing positions, threatening bloodshed if the destruction did not stop. Tom, working in the kitchen at the time, was approached by the committee. He talked to the prisoners, and then to the guards. It was an impossible situation. To prevent bloodshed, he and five others took the kitchen staff hostage, figuring the guards would not move in on the East Wing prisoners.

Days later peace was negotiated. The hostages were released and the prison was put back on the slow road to recovery. Tom and his compatriots were charged for unlawful confinement. But already serving a sentence that stretched into forever, the consequences of another sentence were of little importance. He used his court appearances to lambaste the prison system and its administrators.

After the expected year in segregation Tom was released back into the general population. He immediately enrolled in the university program. Shortly thereafter he met a woman he fell in love with. Over the next three years things remained relatively stable. His education progressed. And his relationship with Anita and her children intensified. For the first time he believed he might get out. Toward that goal he began working.

The BC Pen began to be phased out in 1980. A new maximum-security prison located near Agassiz took most of the old Pen's prisoners; the rest were transferred to lower security. Anita, having at one time been a psychiatric nurse, knew people. She used her influence to help Tom gain a transfer to lower security. Tom knew that by staying trouble-free in Mission for a few years he would nullify the perception of him as dangerous. Four years later he was granted day parole to a halfway house in Victoria.

While in Victoria he took courses to complete his degree. During the weekend he took passes to Anita's. For a time, things couldn't be better. The usual adjustment problems after serving fourteen years failed to materialize. He made friends easily and took pains to cultivate those with control over his life. But eight months into his day parole things began to go wrong.

Victoria is a fairly compact city. Because he liked to keep himself in shape, Tom bought himself a ten-speed bicycle. One morning while heading to school he realized he was being followed. Over the next few days he saw the same car many times, but it was always too far back for the licence plates to be readable, or for him to identify the men inside.

The attempt on his life came on a rainy night. Tom had stayed late at the university, working on a paper. When he left campus to return to the halfway house the city streets were almost deserted. But that was okay because he was in top gear, and the roads were slippery and wet. As he sped down the steep Mt. Tolmie roadway, the car that had been following him pulled up alongside. And then it turned, deliberately, knocking him from the bike and onto the side of the road. The car sped off, leaving him lying in the gravel. A short time later Tom hobbled home. Although the attempt on his life failed, it did remind him he was still getting an annual unsigned Christmas card.

Tom disappeared shortly after that. A warrant for his arrest was issued but the police couldn't find him. None of his family or friends had heard from him either. There were rumours that he had been seen in Victoria's Chinatown, and on the mainland in Vancouver and Surrey. But no one was able to track down the rumours' source. Four months later he still hadn't contacted anyone he normally would have. While hoping they were wrong, his friends began to wonder if Tom's Calgary past had caught him up.

Six months after Tom disappeared he was found by Marlene Moore. What seemed to his friends to be an obvious coverup of his death generated enough media attention for a Coroner's inquest to finally be ordered. But the only people satisfied with that investigation and the Coroner's findings, suicide, were the authorities. For his friends and family, none of the real questions had been answered. ♦

CRISIS MAINTENANCE: A NECESSARY CONDITION?

The search for correctional and educational panaceas within the prison setting has continued for nearly two centuries. The history of prison programming is rife with failed attempts to redeem, reform, resocialize, and rehabilitate offenders. The consistent failures emanating from this "panacea phenomenon" (Eckstedt and Griffiths, 1988:243) may be explained by reference to the inherently contradictory ideological and practical context within which prison education programs are developed and operate.

Education programs (remedial, post-secondary, vocational, life skills, substance abuse, etc.) contracted to operate in prisons are deeply affected by the disciplinary biases of their advocates, and by the political and social temper of the times. As correctional philosophies have changed over the years in response to changing enthusiasms within such specialized disciplines as psychology, sociology, and criminology, education programs have been envisaged as catalysts for moral reformation, rehabilitation, and/or social re- or transformation. The common thread linking these program "visions" is their degree of fit with current correctional ideology and institutional mandates. Traditionally, education programs have, in spite of their liberal claims, become "correctional" programs, rooted as they have been in specific types of scientific knowledge:

[a]ll education in prison becomes correctional for it is subordinated to the extra-educational ends and methodologies of these disciplines and their particular approaches to rehabilitation and corrections. (Knights 1989:64)

Lucien Morin has suggested that education in prison need not, and in fact must not become "correctional" as it then becomes "de-education" (Morin 1984:17). He believes that it is necessary to adopt a philosophy of education which is cleanly divorced from the criminological and justice systems apparatus (Knights 1989:61).

Education, according to Morin, must be judged not with the tools of specialized disciplines and their ideological goals, but as a gratuitous, spontaneous, non-motivated enterprise. Whereas the end of "correctional" education is to deter from future criminal activity, to enhance literacy and employability, and to contribute to the security of the prison, the end of education must be first and foremost human development (Morin, 1981:31). Human development involves the nurturing of the essential characteristic or quality of the human species—the rational quality (Morin 1984:5). Properly nourished, *qua* educated, this rational quality will bring human development to its fruition—universal judgement, the ability to judge and to judge well (Morin 1984:8).

At the highest level of abstraction, the realization of Morin's recommendation may be possible. In the realm of practice, however, Morin's conciliatory pedagogy

may indeed be an “impossible theoretical legerdemain,” as Morin himself admits (Morin 1981:15). Field personnel are faced with the seemingly untenable task of reconciling the irreconcilable; of encouraging and facilitating the most celebrated of liberating endeavours—education as human development—within the least free and most intrusive of contexts the panoptic prison. Practitioners may place education before correction, at least in their personal philosophies; however, the contradictory realities of the prison milieu cannot be ignored, and are often difficult to surmount.

The imperatives of bureaucratic management require that programs operating within subsystems like the prison adapt to the general principles of operation, which are always aimed at securing the institution against disorder (real or perceived), and at achieving social goals (however defined):

[f]orm and function, ends and means, are integrated in a manner capable of being legitimated by socially acceptable norms emanating from the political domain. (Knights 1989:65)

Programs will only be accorded institutional support where their mandate can be integrated within the rationally pursued goals of the correctional enterprise, and to the extent that this mandate does not challenge the administrative order of the prison. The programming unit must, therefore, be prepared to operate as a subsystem itself of the host subsystem—the prison. Failure to assume this role would at the very least jeopardize and indeed may preclude the existence and/or longevity of the program. Assuming this role, however, places the integrity of the program in jeopardy, both in terms of its own mandate (education as human development rather than correction), and in terms of its relationship to its consumer group—prisoner/students.

The dominant missions of the three constituencies involved in prison education—the prison, the programming unit, and the prisoner/student group—may lead to incompatible ideologies and practices (Duguid 1990: 5). Whereas the prison is concerned with security, containment, and rehabilitation, the university, college, or training school has as its end teaching, research, curriculum development, and professional development. The third constituency—the prisoner/student group—has an altogether different mandate, which may include such objectives as liberation, empowerment, academic/vocational achievement, the passing of time, or the avoidance of alternative institutional employment. Given the conflicting mandates of these three constituencies, their affiliation “within the walls” has the potential of bringing the entire enterprise into crisis (Duguid, 1990:2).

Duguid has identified three relationship models which have emerged with regard to various prison education programs across North America. The first is characterized by a short-lived connection, with the insurmountability of the contradictory mandates making a relationship between the prison and the educational institution unfeasible. The incompatibility of the program’s and the prison’s agendas results in crisis—the cancellation of the program. The second model involves the development of a partnership in “correctional” education, with the programming unit making sufficient compromises in its principles and mission to become integrated with the host institution. In this case, the programming unit runs the risk of losing control over operational procedures such as student selection, course and curriculum selec-

tion, and classroom activities. Crisis occurs where the educational program (as "agent of social change") becomes an institutional program (as "agent of social control"). Finally, a third model may develop, wherein a *modus vivendi* is tolerated, each party agreeing to neither press its ultimate case, nor to abandon its mandates, but affording each other some freedom to pursue their particular goals (Duguid, 1990:6). Thus, the constituencies agree to disagree, and the wolf remains at the door—crisis may, or may not occur at any time.

If one accepts that the members of each constituency must be able to pursue their own goals, and if it is precisely this condition which creates and perpetuates the potential for crisis to occur, one must also accept that this crisis potential is a necessary condition for the existence and/or longevity of programs in prison. And if this is the case, it is necessary to examine the logistics of this condition in practice. To what extent can the prison resist the bureaucratic need to integrate education within its correctional ideology? How is the programming unit to operate "within the walls" and avoid the instrumental appropriation of education by the correctional enterprise? How is a prisoner/student to experience his/her potential human development within the most radical of arrestments—prison? To what extent can individuals pursue their own ends, and avoid crisis? What form(s) might "crisis" take, and what might the consequences be? Where official mandates or agendas are concerned, it may well be that no uncompromising relationship can exist in the affiliation of the prison, the program, and the prisoner/student group. It is equally possible, however, that modified or alternative agendas may be perceived and adhered to by the individuals involved, according to their particular situations. ♦

REFERENCES

- Duguid, Stephen. 1990. "Finding Common Ground: Approaches to Higher Education within Correctional Institutions." in *The State of Corrections Proceedings*, American Corrections Association Annual Conference, 1990. Washington DC: St Mary's Press; 129–137.
- Knights, Wayne. 1989. "Culture in the Bureaucracy: The University in Prison." in Stephen Duguid (ed.). *The Yearbook of Correctional Education 1989*. Institute for the Humanities, Simon Fraser University: Burnaby, Canada; 61–78.
- Morin, Lucien. 1981. "Inmate Right to Education." in Lucien Morin (ed.). *On Prison Education*. Minister of Supply and Services Canada, Canadian Government Publishing Centre: Ottawa; 23–33.
- . 1984. "Education or the Violence of Justice." *Occasional Papers On Prison Education*. Institute for the Humanities, Simon Fraser University: Burnaby, B.C. Canada.

FAREWELL, FAREWELL

Farewell Farewell
My little cell
Farewell for evermore
For many a lonely
Mile I've walked
From your window
To your door.

THE GUN

Without that gun my mind would live
A sweeter life than this
In sunlight not in shadows
She would be standing there
A smile so sweet
A laugh so warm
A perfect harmony
The colours would shine brightly
Not a darker shade of pale
My eyes would see
My ears would hear
The one I held so dear.

Who governs me?
My every thought
Decides my every action
Shows how to love
And how to cry
Yet leaves me with no answer
Without that gun my mind would live. ❖

From *Prison Poets* (Hampshire Probation Service, 1987)

PARKHURST HOSPITAL NEW YEAR 1979

Crowded faces in a line
Wandering on to touch the day
In a place that pierces the mind.
Words scarce but not unkind,
Fresh air precious gulped with greed
As one walks the laden path.
Birds find only crumbs to feed,
Sallow faces suddenly laugh.
Winter skies with clouds adorn
Its freshness bites into the skin.
A snow-white blanket on the lawn
Has melted to a layer thin
And as they walk around but silent unaware
Their footsteps echo from the ground
I sense the morbid atmosphere.
Where does it lead? If one could know
To counteract the constant blow
Of wandering in a falsehood dream
If life would be what once it's been.
Sweet are the dreams that touch the night
And steal the hours like a gentle thief
But in the morning, what a fright!
To realize he was only brief.
Tomorrow as the day before
One walks the lonely mile
That in winter seems a bore.
Yet in the summer glows a smile
With heads bowed low they plough along
As eyes convey a sullen glare.
Winds whispering in a song
Consume the stench that's in the air.

1980 PARKHURST PRISON

A silent figure looks beyond
The painted chasm of a world
So marred with veils and sordid bars
Where dreams no longer scorch the stars.
Beneath his smile there burns the pain
Condensed with torment of the mind
Will sleep come, before the rain
To quench the fires before they bind? ❖

From *Prison Poets* (Hampshire Probation Service, 1987)

HEARTBREAK WINTER'S WITHERED LEAVES

1.

I often walk the lunar streets
Where claustrophobic neon lights
Weep on lonely beer-glass panes
And tired shoes on platform steps
Hug warm agoraphobic trains:
There the wind-dark withered leaves
Blow on stone-cold frosted slabs
While smells of burgers spread with sauce
Are driven round in taxicabs.

And like a madman's wild high scream
The wind kicks up each withered leaf
Along the reaches of a street
Where wine drunk flea-bit souls are laid
On warming grates and cardboard feet:
And there I see those silver towers
Built high to stars on marble legs
Where rich obese gold sausage fingers
Are forking fish in large round heads.

The clatter and shatter of cloven hoofs
Winter rain on sloping roofs,
Lightning flashes—thunder crashes—
Across a wind-torn midnight sky
Beating—beating
Drumming—drumming
Over grey-stone churches' hue;

And over rooftops wide and deep
The chimney smoke that cannot sleep.

2.

The opening up of portal gates
To hollow solemn graffiti cells
Where footsteps echo down long halls
And eye-balls peep through metal slits
Into stone-cold prison walls.

Oh God! I see the concrete yards
And tigers stretched symmetrically,
Their eyes are burning coals of fire
To satisfy their captive needs.

Electric lights behind glass shields
Dim-lit dead-cold bulbous heads,
Shine their unkind frozen stares
On wasted smells and wooden beds.

Look! peeping there in black opaque
An ominous shadow—funeral black,
Watching through the metal door
Tearless eyelids, cruel and sore.

A young girl sits on a toilet seat
Paddling with her naked feet,
Splish-splash
Splish—splash
The sound of the sea
The smell of sand;
Giggling—giggling—giggling—giggling,
Drawing castles in her hand.

A detective questions a tear-stained youth
Who spits out blood—and pieces of tooth;
His mind confused, he thinks of hell
Instead of civilized solemn cells.

Loud noise—dank smells—harsh lights—steel bars
Ink-black skies and shining stars;
Oh Mr. Devil be my friend
When will this madness ever end?

(Informers) (pushers) (prostitutes) (drunkards)
(Talking) (lying) (shouting) (crying)

And sleeping on the sick-spawn floor
And old man smiles;
Lying on some forgotten shore—
Listening to the breaking surf—
Dreaming dreams of Camelot
King Arthur's Court
And acts of war:

And over rooftops wide and deep,
The beat-beat-beat
Of Devil's feet.

3.

Now come with me on shuffling feet
Down the abyss dirt-strewn street
Where smells from garbage foul the air
And disinfectant masks the gutters,
While gas-red mantles fed with coins
Heat furnished rooms behind closed shutters;

There a solitary woman stands
Lamplight dusted on her cheeks,
Scarlet billow painted lips
And midnight tears in cobweb eyes
Scheming dreams of golden ships;

She turns and winks a feeble eye
Turns a corner of her skirt
Turns down a stocking-covered knee
Turns her crooked cornered mouth
Turns a Yale lock with a key;
Climbs a dim-lit narrow stair
Sits on a burn-marked crumpled bed
And combs gray nightshade from her hair,
And then undressed she softly cries
And tucks her knees above old thighs;

And over rooftops wide and deep
The midnight moon begins to creep.

4.

'Tis late! and yet, there's more to see
Of heartbreak winter's whither leaves
That blow stone-cold on frosted slabs
And cocaine smells in taxicabs,
And Piccadilly pestered boys
Who try to lie on station seats,
While Northern girls on tear-stained pillows
Turn down their bedsit lamps to sleep.

The polished office lino floors
Cleaned before the break of dawn,
While pregnant women in hard labour
Are screaming for a child to be born.

Sounds of sirens in the night
Doctors dressed in coats of white
Splattered with blood-stained peoples' lives
While nurses comfort battered wives;
Smells of ether, soap, and iodine,
And sobbing mothers' heartbreak crying
For drug-craved children on cold slabs
Delivered by those taxicabs,
Where smells of burgers spread with sauce
Are mixed with diesel-smoke exhaust.

A newborn baby starts to cry
Lighting up a father's eyes,
A boy? A girl? He does not care,
He buys some chocolates, and combs his hair;

And over rooftops wide and deep,
The foster homes where children sleep.

At last grey dawn begins to crawl
Over treetops, roofs and walls,
Where power station smoke is shed
Like flies upon a spider's web,
To light each lamp and shine a beam
In shuttered rooms, where people dream.

'Tis morning now; and yet there's more to see
Of heartbreak winter's withered leaves... ❖

From *Prison Poets* (Hampshire Probation Service, 1987). Available from John Harding,
Chief Probation Officer, Friary House, Middle Brook Street, Winchester SO23 8DQ,
UK.

YOUNG OFFENDER

Oakalla Provincial Prison Farm was one of Canada's nastiest homes of confinement. Its record of atrocities matched that of any federal prison. Prisoners sentenced to death in the fifties were hung in the elevator shaft, and death row was on two South left side.

All offenders, provincial and federal alike, went to Oakalla. From there they were sent to the proper houses of detention. The West Wing was remand, although at times the South Wing and East Wing were also used as remand. West Gate was for the youngest criminals, the Annex for the oldest.

The Annex was closed for good around 1960. (Oakalla was finally closed just this year.)

It was in 1960 that Bobby was sent to Oakalla. Bobby is a real person and his story is true, but Bobby's story is no different than ten thousand others. For that reason Bobby will have no last name. His story goes like this.

Bobby was sixteen when he first went to Oakalla. He was an average boy of average size and description. His crime was possession of stolen property. He wasn't any more innocent or guilty than any of the other ten thousand sixteen-year-olds sent to Oakalla. Most people thought him a potential hardcase and too cocky for his own good. In short, he was a typical sixteen-year-old.

He and his partner in crime, another sixteen-year-old, were dubiously impressed and more than a little afraid upon their arrival. Being processed through A+D left them feeling depersonalized. Stripped naked and going through the delousing procedure so degraded them that they felt ashamed. By the time they got assigned to a cell on high five West Wing, they were totally intimidated. At least they were lucky enough to be put in the same cell together.

The prison was about a hundred years old and their cell looked every day of it. There were metal double bunks with filthy, thin mattresses. A bare toilet sat in one corner at the back of the cell, and an ancient sink in the other. The front of the cell was bar works with a sliding gate. The locking mechanism was a dial-a-cell on a wheel at the front end of the tier.

They stood in front of the open doorway of their cell with disbelief in their eyes. How could anyone expect them to stay in there? Footsteps were approaching and a guard appeared outside of their cell. "Just holler out if there's anything you need and I'll send room service up right away." With that he slammed their cell door closed and walked back down the range.

"Holy shit, can you believe this place?" Cliff said, and still holding onto his bedding, sat on the lower bunk.

"That's my bed. You live upstairs." Bobby said, as he jerked a thumb at the upper bunk.

Although Cliff was much bigger than Bobby, he always let him have his way. "Sure-okay, Bobby." He threw his bedding on the top bunk and stood to one side as

Bobby began to make his bed. After awhile he asked. "Are you pissed off at me or something?"

"How did you guess."

"Well, you hardly said two words to me all the time we were in the city bucket."

"Yeah, I'm pissed off at you." Bobby said as he continued to make his bed.

"Why?"

Bobby turned and faced Cliff. "You were scared stiff when the cops were chasing us."

"Yeah I was scared. You were doing over a hundred miles an hour."

"So?"

"The wrong way, through an exit ramp off the freeway."

"The cops had the right way blocked off."

"Ah, come on Bobby," Cliff appealed.

"Ah, shut the fuck up," stated a voice from a nearby cell.

"You shut up!" Cliff yelled back. It was okay for Bobby to give him shit, but no one else. After all, Cliff was six-three and a hundred and ninety pounds. It was more their friendship and Cliff's nature that allowed Bobby to get away with it. Bobby was the leader of the two, as their individual personalities dictated.

"I'll see you later." The voice threatened.

Cliff was about to respond, but Bobby held up his hand indicating nothing was to be said. Then in a low voice, "This ain't our turf. Be cool."

When Bobby finished making his bed, he opened the bag of effects he'd been issued. Inside was a toothbrush and tooth powder. There was a razor, no blades, and a shaving mug and soap. Also, there was a huge heavy metal cup about the size of two coffee mugs. It had a boot lace wrapped around its handle. It was to prevent the fingers from being burned when the cup was full of hot coffee.

About an hour later a guard passed by doing a count. Bobby and Cliff were lying on their bunks contemplating their demise. A half hour after that the locking mechanism clanged and cell doors could be heard opening. Cons from further down the range started walking by with their coffee mugs.

Cliff's head appeared over the side of the top bunk. "It must be supper." He jumped down and picked up his mug and then pulled the cell door open. But Bobby didn't move. "Aren't you going to eat?"

"No," was Bobby's only reply.

"Suit yourself." Cliff followed the others down the tier.

After a few seconds Bobby got up and grabbed his mug. He wasn't hungry but a coffee'd be all right. He was almost to the landing when he heard a thud, then a groan. He ran to the landing. Cliff lay in a pool of his blood at the other end. Two cons stood over him with towels dangling from their hands. When they saw Bobby they ran down the stairs.

Bobby ran over to where Cliff lay unconscious. His head was split wide open and blood gushed from the wounds. Guards ran up the stairs from both ends of the landing. They'd heard the thuds and groans too. One of the guards pushed Bobby out of the way and said, "We'll take care of this. Go get your supper."

Bobby started descending the stairs. It was the guy Cliff had told to shut up and his cellmate, Bobby thought. They had wrapped their metal cups in their towels. The image of Cliff flashed in Bobby's mind. A chill nearly froze him. His legs

trembled so badly he could hardly walk. He didn't remember going down to the bottom and through the supper line. Thoughts of action and reaction flooded his mind. He could smell and taste Cliff's blood.

He placed his supper tray on his bed. Taking his cup of coffee, he stepped back out onto the tier and started walking down the range. Two cells down was where they were sitting on the bottom bunk and looking right at him. They started to get up but he was on them. First he threw the coffee in their faces. Then without hesitation, he swung the heavy mug into the nearest of the two. Down he went. Bobby hit him again, harder, knocking him out.

The other guy scrambled to the back of the cell. He held his hands out pleading. "I got no beef with you."

"I got one with you, creep." Bobby said as he stepped in. He swung with the cup and with his left fist, hit the guy again and again.

Someone grabbed him from behind. Bobby fought to get free. A voice in his ear said. "Cool it, kid... you got to get out of here, the bulls are coming."

The guy that had hold of him half-dragged him from the cell. Out on the tier, the stranger guided Bobby to his cell. "Stay in your cell. When the bulls come, don't look at them. If they drag you out, don't tell them anything." Then he left the cell, closing the door behind him.

He had no sooner gone than the guards entered the range looking into each cell they passed. Shortly after, the two battered and bleeding cons were escorted off the range.

Bobby sat in his cell. He could have been thinking about what he'd done, or the consequences of his actions, but he wasn't. He was wondering who the guy was who had dragged him out of the cell and why he had done it.

The locking mechanism of his cell door clanged. He heard footsteps approach. A guard appeared in front of his cell. He pulled open the cell door and said, "The Shaker wants to see you on the second landing."

The guard followed Bobby down. On the second landing there were several guards standing around a large desk. Bobby walked by three wall phones and up to the desk. "The Shaker wants me," he said.

The guard he had spoken to looked half amused and half annoyed. "Mister Saker to you." He pointed down a short hallway across from the desk.

One of the other guards went over and unlocked the security gate for Bobby, then pointed to a bench and said, "Have a seat. Saker will be with you in a minute."

There were two more guards in the hallway. The hallway led from the West Wing to the East and South Wings. Between the wings was a large open area with conference tables for lawyer visits. Off this area was the main entrance to the prison and the glassed phone-visiting area.

Saker ran the West Wing. His office was in the hallway that ran between the wings. A guard stuck his head out of Saker's doorway and waved Bobby in.

The guard who motioned Bobby into the office pointed to a chair. Bobby sat down. The guard stood behind him. Saker looked up from a report he was reading. His gray hair stuck out from under his CSC cap. He knowingly nodded his head a few times, then said, "Those two junkies that beat up your cell mate, what happened to them?"

"I give up," Bobby answered.

"Hardcase, eh?" Saker looked into Bobby's eyes. Then he said to the ever-present guard, "Cow barn."

The guard opened the office door and Bobby stepped back out into the hallway. Handcuffs and legirons were produced and Bobby was cuffed. Two guards led him out through the main entrance. They followed a narrow road that went around the East Wing. Beyond the East Wing they skirted the Annex. On the south side of the Annex Bobby could see the women's prison. Down below the Annex was a farm. They walked past the piggery to the cow barn. On one side of the barn a set of stairs descended beneath. Bobby was taken down these stairs to the hole.

Bobby could not believe his eyes; it was a dungeon. Even though it was summer the place was damp and chilly. He was stripped and given a green pair of coveralls to wear. Locked in his cage, he felt lonely and depressed.

One of the two guards who had escorted him said to the keepers, "If he gives you any trouble put him in the hole."

In the hole, Bobby thought. What the hell was this? He decided not to make any trouble.

His cage had a metal bunk bolted to the floor and a plastic bucket. The bunk didn't have a mattress, just strips of steel to lay on. He guessed right about what the plastic bucket was for.

He thought he was in for a long night but much to his surprise he fell asleep almost immediately. The last thing he remembered was the sound of the fans. He'd been thinking he wouldn't be able to get to sleep with the noise they were making. However, the fans served to lull him.

He was brought back to Saker's office after breakfast the next morning. He found himself standing in front of Saker with a guard behind him.

"You still got nothing to say?" Saker asked him.

Bobby just shook his head.

"All right, you can go back to your cell." Saker dismissed him with a wave of his hand.

Bobby didn't wait for a second invitation. He left immediately. Out in the hallway his cuffs were removed and he went back up to his cell.

He stopped at his open cell gate thinking he had the wrong place. But it was his cell all right. A small table had been added. The top bunk was latched to the wall, and his bunk had someone else's bedding on it. The place had been cleaned. Even the sink and toilet were as clean.

A voice beside him on the tier said. "You must be Bobby. You're so butch. Really."

Bobby looked at the effeminate-looking boy standing next to him.

"Did you do that to my cell?"

"Do you like it?"

"Sure, it looks great." He went in and sat on his bunk. The small table was positioned right in front of his bunk. There was a writing pad and envelopes on the second shelf. Several packages of tobacco were there too.

"I'm Cindy," the effeminate boy said. "Bronco told me to clean the place for you. He even gave you one of his tables. He likes you."

"I don't know any Bronco," Bobby stated.

"He also fixed it up so you'd get out of the hole."

"What?"

"Hey... I got to be going. I'm not supposed to be up here. I live on four." Cindy then turned and was gone from sight.

This Bronco guy must be the same guy who got me back in my cell, Bobby thought. He lay back on his bunk. Cliff must still be in the hospital. He crossed his legs and tucked the pillow beneath his head. He wondered if Cliff was okay, but believed he was all right.

What a wild, unimaginable time his last four days had been. Bobby shook his head at the thought of everything that had happened. The car chase, forty-five minutes of high speed pursuit. Three cop cars wrecked. The beating in the Chilliwack police station. He snickered at the farce the bail hearing had been, and the prosecutor's insistence that he was Jesse James reincarnated. Then yesterday when he had arrived at Oakalla, Cliff's head had been split open. His first night was spent in semi-isolation. What kind of a name was Cindy for a boy anyway? He looked up and saw Bronco in the doorway. At least he figured it was Bronco.

"Did you keep your mouth shut when the Shaker questioned you?" Bronco asked.

Bobby sat up, then stood and faced Bronco. "Yeah, I kept my mouth shut."

Bronco stepped into the cell and offered his hand. "They call me Bronco."

"I'm Bobby." They shook hands.

"You were right, going after those two guys," Bronco stated.

Bobby held eye contact.

Bronco continued. "What happened to your friend was tough, but he should have kept his mouth shut. You don't come into a joint and shoot your mouth off when you're a punk kid."

From down the range a voice yelled. "Lock down."

"Come out to yard this afternoon," Bronco said.

"I'll be there," Bobby replied.

That afternoon in the yard with Bronco cleared up a few things for Bobby. Cindy was a transvestite, want-to-be girl. Bobby didn't understand, but it seemed to be normal behaviour as far as Bronco was concerned. That was good enough for Bobby.

The two guys who had busted Cliff's head were sick junkies. A junkie was someone who used heroin. When a junkie couldn't get his heroin he became unstable. Anything could set off a sick junkie. Bronco told Bobby that a lot of guys in jail were junkies.

Bobby asked what Cindy had meant when he said Bronco had gotten him out of isolation. Bronco replied he and Saker had an understanding ever since he'd punched Saker in the face. It had been right after Saker had sentenced Bronco to the hole. Bronco suspected that was why all cons were handcuffed before going in front of Saker.

Over the next couple of weeks Bobby learned a lot about prison and the jungle wildlife. Then one day Bobby was told to pack his belongings. He was moved to the East Wing, high five, left side. By this time Bobby'd been sentenced to one year definite and eighteen months indefinite. The main problem the judge had with the case was when Bobby ran over the cop with the flashlight.

It was the day after he'd been sentenced that Bobby was moved. He was walking

up the stairwell, carrying all of his belongings wrapped up in a gray army blanket, when another con ran right into him. It wasn't an accident. Bobby was in a bad mood. Yesterday he'd been sentenced. Now he had to move from his cell in the West Wing, and now this guy was trying to knock him over. He looked at his bundle of belongings, then at the guy who'd knocked them onto the landing between floors. Bronco had told Bobby about these kind of guys. He knew how to handle bullies who tried to intimidate people. He punched the guy in the nose. The guy simply turned and walked down the stairs. It was pretty much exactly what Bronco said would happen. He picked up his belongings and carried on. He was thinking about Bronco.

Bronco had been right about the bullies, which implied he was probably right about all the other things he had said. Bronco was the father figure Bobby'd never had. Bobby valued the lessons Bronco taught. He thought it was good an older con had taken him under his wing to show him the ropes.

Now that Bobby was no longer doing dead-time, awaiting trial, he was given a job. Monday morning he and the rest of the working population of the East Wing formed lines consisting of their work gangs. One thirty-year-old con in line next to Bobby was smoking. The gang boss yelled. "No smoking." He was looking right at the guy with the cigarette in his mouth. The guy paid no attention to the warning. The gang boss walked up to the culprit. "I said no smoking." He grabbed the cigarette from the guy's mouth and threw it to the ground.

The victim's eyes glared. His left hand snaked out and grabbed the boss's coat up near the neck. He put his face up close to the boss's. "Pick it up." He muscled out the words.

It'd been an obvious error in judgement on the part of the boss. A wall of convicts surrounded him. The guard on the roof of the laundry pumped a shell into the chamber of his twelve-gauge shotgun. But no one paid any attention to the guard at his elevated vantage point.

"Pick it up!" The enraged convict shouted.

With the con still holding him, the boss retrieved the half-smoked butt and he handed it back. The con let him go. The boss then backed out of the circle. The lines of work gangs reformed. Bobby was impressed when nothing more was done about the incident. He figured the guy smoking the cigarette must be one tough boy.

One by one the gangs were escorted out of the yard and to their places of work. As Bobby's gang left the yard he asked the guy next to him, "What gang is this?"

"Dairy," The guy replied.

"Yeah? What do we do?"

"First we feed and milk the cows and clean up their shit. Then we feed the pigs."

"Is that right, eh! My name's Bobby. What's yours?"

"Mark." Mark was a couple of years older than Bobby, and about the same size.

They followed the same route Bobby had taken when he went to the hole. Once inside the barn the rest of the gang went about their duties. Bobby didn't know what to do so he just stood where he was and looked at the cows in their stalls. There were about twenty animals. One of the guys hooked an automatic milking machine up to one of the cows. A couple of others came down the walk between the stalls. One pushed a wheelbarrow with a bale of hay in it. The other guy was throwing the hay into the stalls as they passed.

Mark walked up with two flat shovels and handed one to Bobby.

"Follow me," he said.

The two of them started cleaning out stalls, scraping around the cow hooves. There was a canal for the waste. They pulled the waste along the canal as they went. It wasn't hard work. In fact, Bobby liked it. He'd never been on a farm before so the cows and pigs were new to him. He even liked the smell of the farm.

They were about halfway down a row of stalls when along came the work boss. He was a small man, dressed in farm clothing and rubber boots. He was checking the quality of the work. When he got up to Bobby and Mark, he stopped and looked at Bobby. Then without a word, he continued along his way.

"Who's that?" Bobby asked.

"His name is Lyttle, he runs the farm. As long as we do the work, he leaves us pretty much alone," Mark replied. "Come on. Let's finish up here. We got more work that needs doing."

Everyone on the gang finished their barn duties at about the same time, except for the guy milking the cows. While he kept on milking the rest of the gang went to feed the pigs. The pigpens were below the cow barn. There were lots of pigs kept in different pens according to their size.

In a hundred-gallon tank, a con was mixing the pig feed stew. All of the kitchen leftovers, along with all the farm-grown products that weren't up to par, were being mixed with sacked pig food.

As they got nearer they could hear the mixer singing.

"The dirtiest man I ever saw—

Doo Da, Doo Da—

His name was Lyttle,

And he ate the stew..."

He stopped singing as he saw the others approach. He was standing on staging that was even to the top of the tank. "You guys hungry?" He yelled.

"No way." Dave replied.

A couple of others declined the offer too. They gathered around the tank, looking into it at the pig food. By the expressions on their faces they didn't want any either.

Bobby said, "I wouldn't feed that to a pig."

"Yes you will," Mark assured him.

"We got to feed the pigs now?" Bobby asked.

"Yeah, and you better be careful too." Mark waited for that to sink in.

"Careful, of what?"

"Well, when you're walking through the pigpens with a bucket of pig food, the pigs sort of gather around you real fast."

"So?"

"So if you stop, you're finished. They'll knock you over and if you get any of that pig food on you, they'll eat you too."

"Yeah, sure." Bobby was unconvinced. He was sure pigs were vegetarians.

"I'm serious," Mark assured him. "In some of those pigpens the feed trough is right in the middle. You got to keep moving. Just kick them out of the way if you have to. Dump it in the trough and get the hell out of there."

Barry, another member of the gang, went into one of the sheds. He reappeared

with a wagon with about twenty five-gallon buckets piled onto it. When the buckets were filled only eight at a time would fit on the wagon. When it was loaded, Barry and Dave pulled and Bobby and Mark went along to run the feed into the pigpens.

At the first pen Mark said, "I'll do this one. You watch."

Mark grabbed one of the buckets. When he entered the gate and went into the pen about fifty little pigs attacked him. He just waded through. When he got to the trough he poured in the feed. The pigs attacked the trough of food. Some of them managed to get right into the trough.

Back at the wagon, Mark said, "They're animals."

"I hate pigs," Bobby stated. "They're pigs."

"Yes, they're pigs," Mark agreed.

Following Mark's example, Bobby had no problem. In fact, he enjoyed kicking the pigs out of the way. That was until it was time to feed the big sows.

There were only five or six sows to a pen. The trick was to get in and out before they got you. At the first sow pen they came to, the trough was close to the fence. Bobby climbed over, then reached back and grabbed the feed. He pulled the bucket over the fence and was pouring it into the trough when a huge sow made her run.

Bobby was unaware of her approach. He had just finished pouring in the feed when he looked up and saw the sow charge. He froze, but as the sow neared Bobby dropped the bucket and dove back over the fence. He cleared its five-foot height without touching it. He dove right out of his rubber boots, which were still stuck in the mud on the other side. More from nervousness than anything else, he started laughing, as did the other three guys who had witnessed the feat.

After the feeding was completed they went back to the cow barn. Several of them went straight over to where the fresh milk was being cooled and put into containers. They helped themselves to it. Bobby walked over and scooped a cup too. It was delicious. He'd never tasted milk as good before. He immediately helped himself to another cup.

Mark walked up. "Good, isn't it?"

"Yeah it's great. How come it tastes so good?"

"It's whole milk. The cream hasn't been removed yet."

Bobby wiped the milk moustache from his upper lip with the back of his hand. "What do we do now?" He asked.

"Nothing. We're finished until after lunch," Mark replied.

"What do we do this afternoon?" Bobby asked.

"All we got to do is throw some hay from the loft and feed it to the cows."

They sat around and bullshitted the rest of the morning away. At quarter after eleven they went back to the East Wing and were locked up for the noon count.

After the count, they were let out tier by tier to pick up their lunch which they took back to their cells.

When Bobby finished lunch, he slipped the tray out of the slot in the bottom of the cell door for it to be picked up by the tier cleaner. Then he lay down and fell asleep. At one o'clock the gates were opened so they could go back to work.

Once again the gangs were assembled in the East Wing yard. Bobby noticed that the guy who had been smoking that morning was nowhere to be seen. Bobby surmised that he'd been grabbed while they were locked up over lunch, which was exactly what had happened.

On their way back to work Mark asked Bobby, "You hear what happened to Arnie over lunch?"

"Who's Arnie?"

"The guy who braced the crown this morning."

"What happened?"

"They came for him while we were locked up over lunch. Apparently, there must have been a half-dozen of them in riot gear. They beat up Arnie, then took him to the hole," Mark related.

Bobby was quiet the rest of the way to the cow barn. Arnie had seemed like a tower of strength to Bobby. He had difficulty seeing Arnie beaten helpless and being dragged off to the hole, although he knew that was what had happened. It occurred to him that being a convict didn't give a guy a whole lot to look forward to.

It only took a few minutes to feed the cows. Afterwards, the gang split up in groups of twos and threes, all except for one guy. He was a big solidly built young man about twenty years of age. He stood alone by the ladder that rose up into the hayloft. His name was George Whiggsworth and he had been born and raised on a farm in Ladner.

As George stood there, anyone who knew him knew that he was doing his best to think. One of George's shortcomings was that he got bored quickly. He was apt to do some pretty strange things at times. Most of the gang knew this and more than one set of eyes were on him.

"Look at George over there," Mark said.

Bobby looked.

"He's going to do something," Mark stated.

"So what?" Bobby asked.

"So he's nuts," Mark said as if it didn't have to be said.

George walked over and picked up one of the flat shovels used to scoop up the cow shit. He contemplated the shovel for a few seconds, then started up the ladder into the loft.

"Come on. This should be interesting." He grabbed Bobby by the arm and they headed toward the ladder. A couple of others were right behind them.

When they got up into the loft, they saw George lying on the hay with the shovel clutched to his chest. Not knowing what else to do, the four latecomers lay in the hay too. As George was being still and quiet, the rest followed his example.

Ten minutes passed and Bobby began contemplating another glass of milk. He decided he really didn't care what George was up to. He was just going to get up and go to the ladder when George got up and started yelling.

There must have been a hundred pigeons in the rafters. When George started yelling the pigeons started flying in every direction. With the four spectators watching, George stood in the middle of the loft swinging the shovel around and around his head. Finally, he hit one of the pigeons. He immediately dropped the shovel and dove on the wounded bird. With the pigeon gripped firmly in his right hand George headed for the ladder. Mark and Bobby and the others were right behind him.

They followed George out of the barn. From there he went straight to the nearest pigpen. He stood by the fence looking in on about fifty one-year-old pigs. If Bobby hadn't been told that George was left-field foul-line material, what he saw next would have convinced him anyway.

George looked at the pigeon clutched in his right hand. Then he looked at the pigs milling in their pen. In one swift motion he stuck the head of the pigeon in his mouth and bit it off. He spit the pigeon head on the ground. Blood spurted from the headless bird. George wound up and threw the headless pigeon at the milling pigs. It struck one of the pigs on its side. The pig gave a little startled sideways jump.

George jumped gleefully up and down as if he had scored a touchdown. For a minute the pigs were motionless, except for their sniffing snouts. There was a red splotch on the side of the pig where the pigeon had struck. Then its nearest neighbour attacked the blood splotch. Again and again it bit into the now badly bleeding side of pork. Blood splattered everywhere. The pig that had bitten the other pig was now being bitten on each side of its head by his neighbours. Soon there was blood everywhere, and all the pigs were biting each other.

The four spectators stood with mouths open. They were city boys and didn't know that the smell of blood drove pigs wild. George continued to jump up and down, watching the cannibalistic slaughter taking place inside the pigpen.

Mark was the first to regain his composure. "Come on you guys, let's get out of here before Lyttle catches us." The four of them took off, leaving George to laughingly watch his handiwork.

They didn't see George again, but heard he'd been captured and taken to the hole. All and all Bobby thought it was for the best. He didn't think he'd be comfortable with George around after what he'd seen. George was crazy. There was no doubt about that.

That night Bobby lay on his bunk staring up at the ceiling. With all of the things that had happened since his capture a month ago he thought he'd never be the same again. He came to the realization that he wasn't cut out for this kind of life. No, he promised himself, once he got out, he'd never come back! What Bobby didn't know was that every first-timer, at one time or another, came to that exact conclusion. Not only would Bobby return to prison, but the crazy world of prison life would actually seem normal to him. ♦

CHOICE:

WILL, ELECTION, OPTION, DISCRETION, ALTERNATIVE, VOICE

A presentation to members of the Correctional Education Association, 45th International Conference at Matsqui Penitentiary, Abbotsford, BC, 12 July, 1990

I don't need to go into the countless ways that many operators in the Canadian prison system continue in their unfairness to prisoners, or how they stick their fingers up at the Constitutional protection of the law itself—discriminating against approximately 1,400 Native prisoners, 285 women prisoners, 1,766 prisoners serving life sentences, and even against most prisoners to favour 1,700 sexual offenders and all informers. This is 1990 and this is the reality of prison in Canada.

But we're not here to discuss this prison system or any other prison system. We're here to discuss the education of prisoners. And this in itself is a questionable task—how to present myself as a prisoner in the college program in isolation from the prisoner in the prison system? And is it possible to discuss programs in prison without a discussion on prisons?

When I was first asked to participate in this forum I began with my normal methodology—research. My findings showed that prison education programs do work and are, in fact, economically a zero-cost venture. The Prison Education Project Newgate (in the US in 1970) was just one of the college-level programs offered in thirty-three states, and that was twenty years ago! The conclusion of a 1972 report stated that a prison college program—completely paid for by federal taxes—could be expected to repay its cost within fifteen years. This was due to future tax payments from participants earning higher incomes as a result of college education. A program making extensive use of volunteer efforts could repay the taxpayers in as little as two years.¹

As to general education, an interesting study was done in 1965. Seven hundred seventy-five out of a thousand paroled prisoners from Indiana Reformatory were found to have attended school. Five hundred were selected at random and compared with an equal number who did not attend school. Of school attendees, 15.8 percent violated parole conditions, while 36 percent of non-attendees returned on parole violations.²

In spite of what appears to be distinct and continuing value in prison educational programs, there are barriers that continually threaten the programs' existence. The American public views prison as punishment, believing that man can control what he does and is therefore responsible for his acts; thus, society has the right to retaliate when he acts in a manner that is considered antisocial or unlawful. A further barrier arising out of public sentiment is therefore that politicians receive little pressure from constituents to educate the prisoner, so little funding is made available. An additional barrier is that correctional officers feel threatened by and jealous of education or training programs for prisoners. Often, officers are from white,

lower-middle-class rural backgrounds and are responsible for the custody and control of city-bred and mixed-race individuals. They don't know the cultures, nor do they believe that cons should get opportunities they feel they've never had. These people believe cons are pampered. There are also the barriers of the prisons' physical structures, many of which are cold, isolated facilities built as security models, overwhelmingly constrictive to any sensory input. But the main barriers are in belief systems, in attitudes.

In Canada, however, a few changes have been made. The design of this prison (Matsqui, now twenty-four years old) was intended as a pilot project to treat drug addicts. That label has been changed to substance abusers. Additionally, the recent change in CSC Mission policy—from the safe, secure custody and control of the prisoner to the reintegration of the prisoner into society, specifically permits a new focus on education in Canadian federal penitentiaries. It's now generally accepted that educating the prisoner is necessary to enable him/her to work legitimately when released.

We can see the changes in the physical facilities and in new uniforms—cosmetic changes—but do these change attitudes? It has summarily been proven that educating prisoners is cost-effective and reduces the recidivism rate. More and more programs have been implemented during the last twenty years, yet many barriers stubbornly persist.

The following quote is taken from a presentation titled *Choice or Compulsion* by Stephen Duguid, given as his keynote address to the Kingston Learning Centre-CSC Annual Conference on February 9, 1989 in Ontario. Duguid is Director of the Simon Fraser University program administered in the Pacific Region Prisons.

The incarcerated criminal, the prisoner offers a complex image to those who must work in close proximity with him or her. In the close quarters of the cell block, classroom, prison yard or counselling session, it becomes obvious that many of them, perhaps most, have qualities which are quite likeable and endearing, at times.

In my attempt to comprehend the meaning of Duguid's statement, I applied the following critical analysis, using the logic IF P, THEN Q. If the person must work in close proximity with the prisoner, and then finds a complex image presented by the prisoner, does this mean that: if the person works in close proximity out of choice, then they would not find a complex image? Or: if the person works at a distance, then would the image presented by the prisoner be simple? If the person works in close proximity with the prisoner and it then becomes obvious that the prisoner possesses likeable and endearing qualities, does it mean that if the person works at a distance, then the qualities will not be found, or that the qualities will not be obvious?

Are not the qualities of being likeable and endearing ones that all people possess? Why, then, this point of expressing the discovery about prisoners in a keynote address to other professionals in the field of corrections? Is it because he himself was amazed that he found these good qualities in prisoners, or that he found them only after close encounters? I'm not criticizing Duguid personally, but I am concerned with his attitude. I believe his attitude is a product of his labelling system. Even though education attempts to break through conditioning, often it only

replaces one labelling system with another. And only through releasing judgmental attitudes can a person begin to rid him or herself from conditioned belief systems and attitudes. Cognitive skills are dependent on the lack of conditioning. True cognition is a two-way street!

This critical analysis of an opening remark belies the underlying real problem prisoners face, not only in the system itself but in the world that the prisoner eventually returns to. What I'm referring to is the meaning—the reality of what it is to be a prisoner—the meaning of the label.

Prisoners face the harshest of stigmas. We are counted as one class and rarely as individuals—rarely as men and women. How we, prisoners, are perceived is a cognitive barrier we face day-in and day-out. The principles of reflexivity state: who you are is never independent of the way another perceives you. Duguid (5) states: "We're just not getting at the root of the problem. And that root lies in the realm of thinking or cognition, attitudes and values."

I agree one hundred percent. However, I would venture to say that the problem in thinking, cognition, and values lies as much with the keepers, the general public, and others as much as it does with the prisoner.

The cognitive thinking model presupposes that what we are being taught is correct, and that how we are being taught is the problem which must be addressed. But many people in prison have never had good role models. So I think that what prisoners are taught is important, and when, and particularly the examples shown to them.

What kinds of examples are prisoners shown? How many prisoners have been in youth reformatories, jails, and other prisons before they entered this system? Did they receive education or training in these facilities, or were they systematically brutalized while the keepers tried to break their spirits? What kind of conditions were they kept in for years at a stretch? I know, personally, of one teenager who hadn't had fresh-air exercise for three years while in custody at Willingdon Detention Centre here in BC. Did he have the opportunity of choice?

Choice for prisoners is a concept, though certainly not a reality. Yet Duguid suggests that educating prisoners in the cognitive method will: convince prisoners that they are empowered to make choices, make prisoners aware of the choices they can make, give prisoners basic skills to widen their choices, acquaint the prisoner with the end results of all choices, and provide the prisoner with opportunities to exercise choice. The ignored element here is the reality element of prison itself.

How many real choices do you think the prisoner may employ as a prisoner? Or is Duguid speaking of the choices opened once the prisoner is released? Then perhaps he's speaking of a person. The realities of the choices which can be made today by a prisoner in Canada are as follow: I will either continue in the university, general education, vocational program, or Native Lifeskills, or I will try to move to lower security and eventual release because the reality is that in lower security the prisoner may not be able to participate in university, general education, vocational programs, or Native Lifeskills because there is nearly no continuity of programming—prison to prison, region to region—in Canada.

Case Management policy does not consider prisoners' attainment of university, general education, or a vocational ticket as "bettering themselves." The achievements will be a part of prisoners' education/ employment files and will not automat-

ically form part of the prisoners' Case Management files. The CMO may request this information, or obtain it, but the CMO rarely does, because Case Management does not recognize the value of education or training programs. Only negative reports are automatically part of the Case Management file in Canada, the same file used to make parole recommendations. The prisoner recognizes the value of education and training, but the person holding the writing-stick does not.

No matter how the educators want to convince prisoners that they are empowered to make choices, again contrary reality applies: the reality is that choices considered positive in the outside world are not necessarily viewed as positive inside prison by the forces that control the prisoner.

In Canada, approximately 3,500 staff are employed in security, and another 3,000 in Case Management. Approximately 650 are employed in education, training, and employment of the prisoner (*Focus*, Nov.1989). Security can choose at any time to shut programs down. This year in Matsqui they have already torn down a wall that enclosed a courtyard. The courtyard gave students an open area to read and study and have classes, without the constant scrutiny supposedly unnecessary in a medium-security penitentiary. If there's fog, there is no movement—even though the entire area is equipped with Perimeter Intrusion Devices and fences topped with double-razored barbed wire. The school study area and library are closed after 3:30 PM, and on weekends. All of this is justified by "Security Concerns." Programs are therefore at the mercy of Security Whims. Security chooses. Prisoners' choices have no power.

What a prisoner learns from making choices the system doesn't like is to be harassed and denied continuity of programs, whether educational, recreational, cultural, spiritual, social or pre-release. Constant blocks will be instituted by security and case management alike if a prisoner speaks out against the system in a public manner, if the prisoner attempts to exercise his or her legal rights in court, or if a prisoner attempts to assist a fellow prisoner in physical, psychological, or spiritual danger.

The only real choice the prisoner must make when he or she first enters the system is whether to be a good person or a good prisoner. The greater the choices beyond this which the prisoner attempts to exercise, the greater grief he or she will have in trying to do time; and this will probably contribute to a lengthier stay.

This system wants only good prisoners. Good prisoners cooperate and inform on one another, and good prisoners never criticize their keepers or express their true feelings about the degradation they suffer. Prison administrators do not want to have good people. They want good prisoners so they can control their work environment. All decisions are based on the "good order of the institution," not on the good order of society. Keepers are not even slightly interested in what kind of individual returns to society.

The end results of what educators are trying to teach, which I believe is the value of humanity, is exactly what the prison officials don't want taught. A prisoner empowered to make choices would fracture the confidence of the keepers. And trying to teach a prisoner to comprehend that choices will be available when he or she is released and becomes a person, is like expecting people to understand how to budget money when they've never had any!

If any of you think that in a vacuum of real possibilities any methodology will

influence a prisoner's actions, reactions, and behaviours, you are seeing only part of the problem. Many prisoners see things more clearly than what this system or many people wish to believe. A part of the problem is that most of what a prisoner perceives is constantly under attack, called untruths, exaggerations, or repressions of guilt.

As prisoners, our actions and reactions are interpreted only in the context of being a single entity class—the prisoner—rather than in the context normally associated with any individual in crisis. As prisoners we're already doomed to the ranks of the liar and cheat—nearly everything we attempt to express as true perception is labelled wrong or bad.

Cognitive factors are working against the prisoner. Simply put: we're subject to documentary interpretation. This means that once a label is attached to a prisoner all of the documentation in the file will support that label. This is the only true continuity that the prisoner experiences, along with the extreme requirements of energy needed simply to repress the desire to be free.

All prisoners have this in common, as well as the fact that we are all labelled deviant. Yet the commonality between us is the fact that now, after prison, we may all be creatively involved in rejecting the status quo arrangement, the mainstream societal image. Few people in the system wish to admit that we have any just cause whatsoever for this rejection. Yet we were not born rejecting society. Many of us learned through brutal experiences and witnessing the corruption and hypocrisy of bureaucracies of which Corrections Canada is a splendid example! And sadly, many prisoners believe that society in general is exemplified by the prison system itself. Therefore, prisoners may not want to grope in the same tunnels of fear that we see many crawling in. Maybe we've seen enough. Maybe we've experienced enough pain.

Prison experience teaches you that you must learn to manipulate, to say what is expected, to say what your keepers want to hear. To do otherwise is to invite constant rebuke. Certainly the most obvious message we are given is to hide our real feelings. If the prisoner is educated, will we then still be only educated prisoners? Should not the focus be on removing the stigma and the conditioning of the prisoner-label? Otherwise the prisoner will be no further developed in his or her ability to feel; to understand human relationships and the bonds necessary to build them, along with the responsibilities that will enable human relationships to be healthy and fulfilling; and to understand how and why contributions towards humanity must be our main focus.

Statistics show that 40 percent of prisoners are functionally illiterate and so the panacea is to educate prisoners. Statistics also show that less than 40 percent of federal prisoners are in permanent relationships, and no statistics are available on how many of those relationships survive a prison sentence. The Southam Literacy Survey, 1987, also proved that 45 percent of the group aged sixty-five and older have low literacy skills. Yet, how many people aged sixty-five and older are in prison?

Please don't misunderstand. I believe in education. I enjoy and value the university education I am receiving at Matsqui. If I didn't believe in it I wouldn't be engaged in a battle I'll probably lose trying to ensure that all women will have the same quality education. But please do understand that the positive results of the

education of prisoners cannot be accomplished in a vacuum of other commitment. At the present moment in Canada, we are in the midst of conflict between the security minds who dwell on the negatives and seek only to control, and the new mandate of the CSC of encouragement of the potential of the prisoner to become a useful citizen in society.

I read the 1989 Council of Europe final activity report on education in prison adopted in June of last year. This was the result of seven meetings held over a four-year period by select experts from nine European countries.

The predominant theme was first that the education of prisoners must—in its philosophy, methods, and content—be brought as close as possible to the best adult education in the outside society. Second, prison education should be a constant seeking of ways to link prisoners with the outside community, and to enable both groups to interact with each other as fully and as constructively as possible. But more important, it should take into consideration the whole person in the totality of his or her social, economic, and cultural context.

The most blatant example of discrimination in Canadian prisons is against Native peoples and women who are shown absolutely no respect for their values. The Council of Europe recommends what we as prisoners are asking for right around the globe. The prisoners who rioted at Strangeways in Great Britain brought world attention to this same message—that we wish to be treated with dignity as men and women in our cultural contexts, not as animals to be controlled and broken.

If you are to be successful in your chosen fields, the prisoner must be enabled to survive as an individual. We must be granted a mandate to participate in an uncensored and unified voice, and granted free expression without fear of retaliation. When we are thought of simply as people who have made wrong turns in life due to many factors, some in our control and some out of our control, then the cognitive model and all teaching methods will have some value. Until the prisoner can be valued as a person, no other values can be realized. ❖

FROM *PRISON POEMS*

THOUGHTS OF THE SAGE

The sage avoids the world in his rocky
cave;
I run from life in the bottom of my cell.
No escape for even smoke or ether here,
though water flows unceasing among the
cliffs.

HERMIT THOUGHTS

No surprise in learning modest hermits
hide among the highest peaks;
nothing strange in finding great masters
amid the boisterous market crowds.
But stuck away from the world, in a
bottomless pit,
with nothing and no one to care:
now that's thought-provoking.

LONGING

I'll return to my homeplace in ten years
or so,
for Mount Truong has few brilliant sunsets,
few burning paths or dusty lanes
And love fades away in my eyes.

JOURNEY'S END

Oh, not to be swayed by worldly concerns
or the love of dark forests,
by the path of shame;
no light in the tunnel.

I am willing to work
but the world cares not for weaklings.
I dream of heaven far away,
the skies low and cloud-thickened.

Among the riverside, I stand by the grass;
only a slender shoulder to continue life's
 struggle,
with grey hairs blurring the seaview
and the clouds reluctant to disperse.

The clouds do not return North.
One gropes its way shamefully through
 sunset paths
to Mount Truong,
yearning for the distant sky.

(Translated by T. Carolan & F. Young)

THE BEST HOTEL IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Tourists don't ride the city buses in Bangkok. No one speaks English on them and the signs and schedules are in Thai, but when I crossed my wrists in the international language of handcuffs, the woman in the orange print dress sparkled with understanding, "Lad Yao Lad Yao." The Bangkok guidebook did not include a scenic tour paragraph on Lad Yao prison and how to get there.

She pointed off the north edge of the bus map into an uncharted area. And a dirty scrap of paper scotch-taped by a doorway in the guest house on Hao Sam Road only read, "Go and see fellow countrymen locked up in Lad Yao Prison. Visiting hours for foreigners 9–12 Thursday only. Take the Air Conditioned 11 Bus from Democracy Monument." But the AC Bus 11 didn't stop at Democracy and didn't go anywhere near the edge of the map. The woman smiled. "Bad Men, many bad men!" I was encouraged. The 59 bus chugged forward in the noxious haze past the long block, where at right the tribe of men dressed as women pose. The lady muttered to the conductor, pointed at me, and got off.

The pilgrimage had begun at 8:30 AM, with the kind of clock-watching that western tourists do, but as my consciousness wearied in the wandering approach to Lad Yao, I resigned myself to the timelessness of prison journeys. Simon Henderson and I might or might not meet. But at exactly 11:30 bus 63 shuddered to a stop outside a tropical fort. Kluong Prem Central Prison. Guards in dusty khaki pedalled along the entrance road circle before the main gate. Guards lounged in a corrugated shack lazily smoking cigarettes and listening to the chattering radio. I looked across at Kluong Prem and took a deep breath. Prisons are like alien satellites that masquerade as buildings where the normal customs of social intercourse are understood. It's easy to be deceived.

The outside flowerbeds glowed red beside the immaculate lawns: the visual rewards of a regimen of unlimited sunshine, water, and human labour. The walls were a smooth yellow, adorned with a crown of triple-strand electrified wire. Three quiet guntowers gazed down on the moat that stretched on both sides of the grand gatehouse. The overall impression was of a museum.

A florid white man stood near the entrance to the concessions area. He loomed over his Thai lady companion. Reverend Paul of the German Congregational Church came every week to visit the 30–40 German contingent. I was anxious to sign in and enter, but he explained carefully that visiting hours for foreigners were actually 1–3. I wasn't late after all. He was mildly outraged by the Thai legal system. He likened the role of a lawyer to a blind man in a labyrinth: the lawyer isn't allowed to see the evidence against an accused, know the number of witnesses or any of the facts pertaining to the case. Sometimes if enough money is forthcoming from the parents or the embassy, he can arrange a sentence revision. There is no jury system and it is customary to double the sentence if the accused does not immediately confess. One lad from Köln received twenty years for two grams of

heroin instead of the standard ten because he insisted on his innocence. Rev. Paul believed that all of his Germans are guilty but that the punishment has been far too severe. Their crimes are generally drugs, passing bad cheques, and arranging Thai girls for the European market.

Across from us a row of impassive Thai women bought groceries from several guards manning a prison commissary: rice, sugar, bread, cooking oil, tomato paste, tea, all of it stuffed into clear plastic bags. At an adjacent table two other guards rechecked the bags' contents and labelled them: Scheiber, Duclos, Aldrington. Rev. Paul's lady companion didn't understand English; she sat well composed, hands clasped over a Bible. All foreign prisoners must buy their own food, cells, medicine, everything. Without money one lives very poorly.

There is a worse place though. Rev. Paul grimaced as he favourably compared Kluong Prem to the Immigration Detention Centre. "That is Hell." Two hundred fifty or more men are packed into a cell the size of a volleyball court, unable to even move. Even children. It is a place for those who overstay their visas or are unable to afford their own departures. They stay a month, two months, sometimes even a year.

We gazed across the spacious grounds at a gang of young Thai prisoners joking and laughing as they carried their gardening tools to the door and came in for lunch. "And violence?" I asked.

"Inside, the blue-shirted trustees carry clubs. The guards look the other way when they give beatings. But foreign prisoners usually don't receive such treatment because of foreign embassy influence." The garden workers are short-term prisoners; inside everyone must work making plastic flowers (a Thai growth industry) or at the printing plant. Only the Thais are paid.

Rev. Paul's companion spoke to him in German. He looked quickly at his watch. "You're fortunate. Over Christmas you can visit inside. Each prisoner is allowed three inside visits per visitor. Then you have normal visits and you must yell to each other across the mesh partitions. Prisoners are not allowed to comment on conditions." He stood up. "Most prisoners get out after four or eight years on King's Pardons or amnesties." Over his shoulder he advised, "Wait and they will come and get you."

I stood in line at a ticket window and signed. My name. Passport number. Whom did I want to visit. The smiling Thai guard waved me vaguely back and said in English, "We call." I tumbled down onto a bench and waited. Sand fell out of the bottom of the clock. Several guards wandered into the shade dragging stubby carbines by the barrel. They tossed them onto a table and sauntered over to the food vendor. Soft laughter welled up from the shade of the covered roundseat where blue-shirts, guards, women, and children all sat together, out of the hot sunlight.

Three Iranians swaggered in like characters out of a gangster flick: hairy chests, gold chains, sunglasses, and scowls. They knew the routine and went right to the food line. My lunch was rice, spicy vegetables, and carbonated green syrup in a Fanta bottle. Ten baht. The Thais watched me eat. Godot still hadn't come so I crossed the entrance circle to an open-sided warehouse below the prison walls full of wooden furniture. A shrivelled guard, like a gourd stuck on a khaki scarecrow, was parked behind a huge desk, dwarfed by rows of gleaming sideboards, cupboards, and chest of drawers. On the outer edges were table-and-chair sets. The

furniture was Thai hardwood of lovely colors but designed to imitate the height of cheap Western motel fashion. The guard woke up and scuttled after me, first pointing out the 5000-baht slab round table and chair set, then sliding gradually down the price scale as I didn't bite, to the 70-baht bamboo roll-down blinds with gaudy depictions of velvet birds and big-breasted women painted on them. Then he abandoned me for a Mercedes full of plump Thais that drove up through the hot dust. It was a slow afternoon for prison industry sales.

At one o'clock I was back at the visitor's wicket. A crush of women were arguing with the guard. He caught my glance and waved me off. I drifted in slow circles, then a hustler in a flower-print shirt showed at my elbow. His English was street smooth. "Do you know what the fuck is going on?"

"No."

"Inside or outside visit?"

"Don't know." Then a young Thai girl left the arm of her disco man and approached us. She pointed at the main block of the prison. "Go! Go!" So Sport and I went.

We entered the yellow brick wall gate and passed inside. Ahead was a concrete tunnel and double lane truck-size iron doors. My feet were light, no fetters on me. A set of warders pulled me over for a search. An involuntary moment of unease at the knife, knot of rings, and bottle of alcohol-based mosquito repellent in my bag, but I'd rather take my chances inside than entrust them to the guards. The feeling was instinctual. Pat down. Then they waved the bag through unchecked. Maybe they had a different set of priorities. The gate led out to a square courtyard of verdant lawns, palm trees, and a tropical flower bed paralleling each side of the centre roadway. Straight ahead was another guarded gate; along that entire wall and halfway up the adjoining sides was thick mesh fencing. Far to the left, Rev. Paul and his lady friend were pressed up to the mesh listening to the babel of shouting voices.

Sport nudged me. "The monkey cages. A real headache." Street visitors leaned on the outer fence. There was an intervening space of ten feet, then the prisoners pushed against the inside mesh, yelling through the general hubbub to their visitors.

"Inside visitors wait here." Sport glanced up at me. "Who you visiting?"

"An Englishman, I don't know him."

"You a missionary?"

"Not me." Sport says he's from Singapore, but he's been around the local jail circuit. "Thailand has the best prison in Southeast Asia right here." He waved his arms like a tour guide. "Jail in Singapore is a fucking hole. Locked in your cell twenty-four hours a day to rot until your sentence is over. You don't want to go to the Philippines. In Thailand they separate the foreigners from everyone else. The others don't." He stamped his foot. "But don't go to the IDC (Immigration Detention Centre). I was there two weeks because I overstayed my visa. Caught drunk in Pat Pong. Hundreds of people jammed into a cell together. Iranians, Iraqis, everyone. Not enough room to lie down and sleep—you have to sleep sideways. Buckets for toilets. Fucking horrible. And they robbed me of 13,000 baht. Guards said that if I took it in someone would steal it. So I signed for it and got a receipt. When I got out and asked for my money back and showed the receipt, no one had heard of it. Couldn't read the name on the receipt. All of it in fucking Thai so how would I know?"

Sport took a deep drag on his butt and gazed over at the monkey cages. "Did four years in Thailand myself."

"How did you get back into the country?"

"Hey, this is Thailand. It's a game. You come in, you leave. You leave your money here. Now I've got a three-month non-immigrant visa, it's the best kind. You know we're lucky to get inside visits. Never had them when I was here. I've an English friend inside. He's done ten years already on a credit card fraud. He gets charged, spends a year or two fighting the case, is convicted and does his time, then they transfer him to the next jurisdiction that has an open charge against him and it all begins over again. He's been in Rayong, Chiang Mai, and now back to Bangkok. A good guy." Sport was philosophical. "If you've got the money you can get all the cases thrown together, but," he shook his head and grimaced as a bull-necked guard approached us, "they say never trust a Thai." The old screw waved Sport to the gate and he disappeared inside.

At 1:30 I was waved to the gate. The old sergeant grabbed my bag while a younger guard rubbed his hands pro forma down my pant legs. He didn't use his fingertips; he wasn't keen. The old face extracted the mosquito repellent out of my bag and peered at it with habitual suspicion. He sniffed the oily yellow liquid. Please taste it to be really sure, I was thinking. But he stuffed the bottle back in with the knife and the rings. All clear.

Inside was another grassy well-kept courtyard; at the other end, under pavilion tents, blue-shirt figures sat like dolls on a shelf. To my left, creeping along the base of the wall, was a chain of white prisoners and their khaki escorts. The prisoners' legs were shackled with long chains which they'd tied to their calves with cloth so they could slow-walk instead of shuffle. They were on their way to the monkey cages.

I strode in; everyone else seems in slow motion. I stepped down into the tent shadows and a slender man, with wispy blonde hair tossed sideways, half rose and tentatively asked my name. The plastic glasses unevenly perched on his bony nose had a broken stem, patched together with a glob of Scotch tape. I introduced myself and we shook hands like civilized people. "I read the notice on Khaosam Road and I'm sympathetic to this sort of thing."

"Have you done any time?" I held up two hands. "Then you know what it is like."

The convict's tour-guide rap is passed by word of mouth. KP Central Prison has seven or eight thousand prisoners, the drug detention centre Bombards, another three thousand; two thousand women languish in the Women's Prison. There are about three hundred foreigners here, eighty of whom are white: Germans, French, Australians, Americans, and nine English. The Arabs and the Iranians are stupid dickheads.

You need money. Every prisoner is expected to work for eight hours each day making artificial flowers or gluing paper bags. The foreigners never do. They pay a Thai 40 baht every two weeks to produce their quota. The guards encourage this. Long-term prisoners (an average sentence is twenty-five years) have paid 5-7000 baht to have their own traditional Thai-style wood and thatch huts built in the courtyards. You can stay there by buying, renting, or sharing. Simon has no money; he shares. The German, French, and American embassies understand the situation and

send about \$100 US a month to each of their citizens held prisoner to keep them alive. Britain, naturally, gives nothing. Simon depends on the largesse of— Suddenly, a bearded Australian inserted himself into our conversation. He leaned over and told Simon, “The money your brother was supposed to send never arrived.” He nodded toward his visitors. “I’ve just had word.” I looked away to lessen Simon’s embarrassment but he’d lost this battle before and was accustomed to it.

“We’ll talk later,” he said to the Australian. Simon then explained that his brother owned a clothing store in the West End of London, but that they were not really very close. A common refrain.

The prison provides one meal a day at noon: rice, vegetables, and spice. Foreigners buy their own food. No money and you’re hungry. There is a hospital but never enough money to buy medicine. Thai prisoners regularly die of neglect; one or two are carried out every day. The foreigners with AIDS have a tough time. Only a dozen are left. They almost all contracted it from dirty needles back in 83–84 before everyone was really aware of the problem. They need lots of medication but can’t get it. Medicine is much harder to get than the heroin the guards sell.

If you want a single cell you pay for it. Two or three thousand baht gets electricity and a fan installed, the cell thoroughly cleaned out and painted. The cellblocks were originally Japanese Army officers’ quarters. After forty-five years they are run-down, cramped, and incredibly dirty. “It’s all money,” Simon says. “I need 575,000 baht to clean up my situation. Thai law is a bad joke. Your lawyer receives no information, no police reports, no witness lists, nothing. All he can do is plead mitigation and if you have enough money, arrange a sentence reduction in the appeal process by bribing everyone. The headlines make it more difficult: ‘Huge Foreign Traveller’s Cheque/Credit Card Ring Smashed.’ I was waiting in a bar in Chiang Mai for this German to pass a card, but the German looked too young and the store owner called the police. Five minutes after they had him he gave them my name, the bar I was waiting in, and the names of our Thai accomplices. I’ve been in a year fighting this case. In another year I’ll be found guilty.” Simon knew that he’d get a double sentence because he didn’t plead guilty. But he couldn’t bring himself to just give up—a case of cultural misconceptions. “There was no big ring. Just trying to get along, the worst position to be in. My Thai companions feel good about the case because of the lack of evidence but my lawyer tells me it looks bad. Occasionally foreigners are found innocent by the judge if there is no evidence but usually the police find the witnesses they need. And you never know if the bribes will take or not in Thailand.”

“Does anyone ever escape?”

“No, the guards will kill you. It’s easy for them if you’re trying to escape. A Canadian got out of Chiang Mai. Pulleys and ropes over the wall. He paid off the guards, they only get 2000 baht a month. It was a clean break. But now all the foreigners up there are locked up inside all of the time instead of being allowed out in the sunlight like we are here. He got across the border into Burma but ran out of money in the jungle. Finally he returned to Chiang Mai to get money out of his bank account. His poster was plastered everywhere. The bank people asked him to wait till they processed his request and then rang the police. He was still waiting when they arrived.” Simon didn’t make any judgements.

“The real route out is the King’s Pardon. The request has to pass through seven ministries before it gets to the King’s desk for signature. You can only apply after you’ve done two years. Theoretically the application takes three months to clear each desk. That’s where the embassy could really help. They could hurry the request along, chasing it at every step so it took days instead of months.”

We shared a Coke that a trustee insisted I buy for 10 baht. Simon nodded. “This is the first year we’ve had inside visits. Then only at Christmas. Usually we’re out in the cages. Headache, sore throat. No privacy. It isn’t a nice feeling.” Simon tells me there are no conjugal visits, although for a couple hundred baht the guards will arrange a romantic rendezvous with a Thai convict drag queen.

Simon’s daily routine is simple: Up at seven and locked out in the courtyard. Breakfast with his mates. Talk for an hour or so and then start to exercise. Borrow the weights a friend brought in. Then relax. Talk. Maybe jog a bit. Talk until lunch when they bring the prison Thai food. Then talk with friends after lunch. Maybe play football (soccer) or Takraw (the rattan ball game played over a volleyball-size net with no hands) with the Thais. Then about 3 o’clock get ready to go back in. At 3:30 locked back inside. No education or vocational programs. “Then I read. I read lots of books. No TV. No radios. Nothing changes. That’s the main thing. It’s very boring.” Simon’s pale blue eyes are still clear.

Then the guards let loose a series of piercing whistles. Time up. I was motioned away and the fragile bubble of the visit popped. The difference is that I was the visitor who walked away. The Australian’s visitors dropped me off at Sukumvit Road and headed straight for the airport in a rush to be off.

Postscript:

That evening I stopped by the Khaosam Police Station to file a theft report. A young Thai officer with a gentle smile welcomed me. He knew a little English. “What you lose?”

“A camera.” They all smiled when he translated. Thais like Japanese cameras. I sat down to fill out a lengthy report. A cute girl came in leading a bedraggled bag lady. There was a barrage of chatter I didn’t understand. She pointed at the bag lady and then turned an intoxicating smile on the police officers. The older sergeant raised his voice at the bag lady. She didn’t answer. Deaf, or dumb insolence, who knows? The stocky sergeant was not happy with her reply. He walked over and got in her face. Barked at her. Grabbed her by the arm and pulled her to an inner office door. She resisted as dead weight. WHACK. Knuckle backhand across the face. Bag lady put her hands up to protect her face. He threw her down on the floor. Leaned over and began methodically punching her in the face. She curled up. He put the black boot to her. I continued writing. I didn’t want to seem interested. The young police officer in front of me trembled with a nervous smile as he saw me glance at him. The sergeant was screaming at the bag lady. He grabbed her hair and dragged her off to the cells. The cute girl watched impassively from the door. She was pretty enough to be on a Thai travel poster.

The next morning I left Thailand. You could still see Christmas hanging off the facades of the big hotels. Lad Yao was invisible and the streets were full of bag people. ❖

A LETTER

A caress from outside—
You know what you're waiting for,
And who rests in your heart
For an hour
Or a moment.

A gift
You're almost afraid to open.
A piece of her you tear
To find what's hidden in there.

A paper she clasped
Between naked hands.
Earlier, a little moved,
She touched it with her glance.

Time finally stops.
When you're far away and alone,
A piece of her travels
Through the pages
And returns to you!

(Translated by MC & JH)

TWELVE SQUARE METRES

Three metres by four...

The despair of bars
Patterns my sleepless night
My thoughts bump into each other
In this tiny hole.

Three metres by four...

Infinite space
For happy cockroaches
To take their children for a walk
Over bread mountains.

Three metres by four...

Miserable palace
Of iron and stone.
Under grey covers,
Cigarette in my mouth,
I weep gently.

Three metres by four...

My three companions
Escape in their dreams.
Far away the bell sounds
Death-knell of my night. ❖

(Translated by MC & JH)

MINE TO MALL

"The truth of nature lies hid in certain mines."

—Francis Bacon

The mine was the womb of the Industrial Revolution. The coal that fuelled it, the iron that built it, and the gold that financed it were brought up from the mine on the first rails. The first steam engines toiled at the pit-head. Iron foundries and manufacturers grew among its tailings. Below was an unchanging, inorganic, inedible world where nature provided only space: time, light, and air were all products of artifice in the mine. Man descended into the underworld and brought hell back up with him. The smoke from demonic coalfires cast a black pall over the industrial cities, enclosing underclasses in subterranean darkness. The ethos of mining infected the psyche in a profound and morbid way. Lewis Mumford describes this Paleotechnic morality:

The psychological results of Carboniferous Capitalism—the lowered morale, the expectation of something for nothing, the disregard for a balanced mode of production and consumption, the habituation to wreckage and debris as part of normal human environment—all these results were plainly mischievous. (Mumford, 158)

Libido and Id, the trolls of Freud, lurked beneath the crust of consciousness. Middle-class fears and aspirations ran along the vertical axis: when they looked back, they looked down. A criminal underworld preyed on their property. Nature and society were both undermined.

The treasures and wonders born of the mine contrasted with its essential ugliness and degradation of nature and society. This created an intolerable ambivalence in the human psyche. Santa Claus was raping Mother Nature. But this dreadful world produced a certain tingle, an awe, a horror, a perhaps not-so-unpleasant emotion called sublimity. As the Industrial Revolution progressed to its second stage and the hellish fires were replaced with electric light, the transvaluation of the ugly began. Terror turned to enchantment. The cloacal horror of the sewers of *Les Misérables* was transformed: *les égouts de Paris* became a tourist attraction (and a musical). The producer-based dystopia took cover behind a consumers' utopia. The forbidding, the inorganic, the claustrophobic became inviting, clean, and insulating. Nature was dangerous. Nature was messy. Nature was something you tracked in on a clean linoleum floor.

The triumph is not complete. Nature remains a moral reference point. Nature intrudes on the artificial paradise. Whitefly on the houseplants. It's embarrassing. It's threatening. "Natural despoliation is not just a result of economic pressures; it is

also a political action aimed at removing a source of subversion" (Williams, 147). Nature has its human agents. Mourning a human landscape is not just sentimentality; it is an ideological response to tyranny.

There is something persistently horizontal about nature. Why back to nature? Why is it called a retreat? Retreat from civilization in the direction of nature becomes more and more difficult, more exclusive. Technologies are not merely intrusive objects anymore: they are an environment. Outdoors is displaced farther and farther away.

Underground is safe: the trenches of the Great War, the London subways during the Blitz, the suburban Cold War bomb shelters show a progressive degree of comfort, convenience, and security. Modern society provides the ultimate retreat into technology: the shopping mall, an "enclosed realm of consumer bliss, sealed off from the disorders of nature and society" (Williams, 109). The trolls have been driven out. The rain never falls. The light never fades. The soothing music never ends. Never too hot or too cold. No animals to foul the paths. The food is clean. Security is courteous and efficient. A beautiful and enchanting retail hell.

The mine was the paradigm of the intrusive, extractive, exploitative capitalist method applied indiscriminately to markets, to labour, even to farming.

The Industrial Revolution has been described as a "prime discontinuity." Rosalind Williams in *Notes on the Underground* calls it a "period of cultural mourning and upheaval" (Williams, 2). While the literature of the nineteenth century still sang the strains of longing for an age before agriculture bound him to the soil, man was being ripped from that soil and deposited rootless into an increasingly alien world. Artifice displaced nature with the terrifying acceleration of fire, steam, and iron. A wave of gadgets and commodities covered the world and entombed it.

The intensive excavation of mines, canals, tunnels, and sewers revealed a vast archaeological past. Old civilizations were unearthed, the bones of apemen and fabulous monsters, the stuff of myth. Despite the horizontal influences of narrative, clock time, causality and progress, the Netherworld persisted amid the interactive evolution of the technological, social, and intellectual structures of the Industrial Revolution. Darwinian evolution could be traced "back" and "down" through the strata of the earth. Marx dug through to the subsurface of history and discovered the hidden forces of production.

Nature persists. The spiritual crisis is not over. The cultural longing continues. Nature documentaries play in the media room. And the acceleration increases with the keening: mournful country songs bounced off a satellite at the speed of light and fed through headphones into the cranium... recorded in an echo chamber. ❖

REFERENCES

- Marx, Leo. *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*. London: Oxford University Press, 1968.
- Mumford, Lewis. *Technics and Civilization*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1963.
- Williams, Rosalind. *Notes on the Underground*. Cambridge (MA): MIT Press, 1990.

ON ROLLER SKATES

Long tanned legs
in knee socks
and roller skates
your golden hair
like ripe wheat
in a breeze as you
spin through a bouncing
turn in a flash
of white cheeks
my heart skips a beat
and gives chase.

MIDNIGHT

The cold taste of your
lips, the cold tingle
of angels in the snow
the world turns into
crystal
with a breath it shatters
ringing clear into vignettes
moments
smiles
we laugh a while
and cross a bridge
into tomorrow.

BONNE NUIT

The shining seas
the shifting

sighs
of time
and moon
upon
your face
so alluring
to my
lips and
finger tips
as you
rest
in satisfied
undress
within my
embrace
and
night's fallen
silence
dreams of where
and when
I can not
tread
but dream
and draw
you
closer
on journeys
of my own
instead.

YOU TAKE MY BREATH AWAY

Turning with you
the wind
that makes your earrings
sing
and the blood rush
through my
veins

we touch
your arms tight
around my neck
your eyes close slowly
as our bodies tangle
and we kiss
tasting
your lips
you take my breath
away.

BABY I'M BLIND

Sunrise and sunset
is you

the sun and the
moon

you all right
with
surprise
caught up in
all

of the moves
all
of the lines

desire becomes
a
tide
you look at
me

with
so much
love

in
your
eyes

that
Baby I'm blind. ❖

PURA VIDA

He straightened the paper in the typewriter and gazed over it at me. His eyes were vague and dry. He looked old enough to have seen most human foibles and young enough to tolerate one more.

He spoke careful academic Spanish. "The statement you are about to make must clearly establish your innocence in the matter under investigation. With me you can be completely frank. I serve the court, not the police, and I am sworn to hold whatever you tell me in the highest confidence. If you are innocent, as your friend's statement indicates, it's in your best interest to answer my questions fully. Have you understood? Very well, let's begin. Your full name is Richard Bird?" He pronounced it "veerth."

"Yes; that's my passport by your elbow."

"So it is." He glanced down to verify the veracity of my face. "Your profession would seem to be... farmer?"

"Yes, pig breeder."

"Farmer is sufficient. You're married? With children?"

"Four children."

He asked for their names and ages and punched them into the machine. "And they miss you, of course, and your presence is needed to run the farm and hold the family together?" His fingers were running away with him: I recognized another creative writer. He needed only a grunt from me to compose another paragraph.

"I see this is a valid Canadian passport. What is the purpose of your visit to Costa Rica?"

"To explore the possibility of moving here and setting up a farm."

"And what do you think of that possibility now?"

"I'm beginning to experience some doubts."

He beckoned to the guard behind me and told him to remove my handcuffs. While this was being done he silently read over what he had written. When the guard stepped back to the wall the clerk smiled up at me with a fresh light in his eyes: welcome to the human race.

"Don't let this experience mislead you. Nowhere in Latin America is the freedom of the individual valued higher than in this country."

"As long as he behaves himself," I said.

"Of course. Freedom carries its own responsibilities. One of these is to maintain a civic order so that others may enjoy their freedom too. Now, tell me when you met the American William Schiller." He glanced along the counter to my friend, who was deep in dialogue with another official.

"Is that his name? Everyone calls him Sam."

My naivety amused him. "People who live, shall we say, on the fringe of society often assume a false identity as a defence against the police. That's not our concern. Schiller has his problems and you have yours: though his confession would seem to put you in the clear."

"Fine. I'd like to leave as soon as possible."

He smiled. "I regret that the penitentiary will be your home for some time yet. You are being held because in some quarters you are still under suspicion. We have to prepare a statement now that will convince the judge of your innocence. But remember, he sees in one week more criminals than you would meet in a lifetime: so he must see clearly where you stand. Now, to the circumstances of your first meeting with Schiller?"

"It was on a beach in early January. I had just entered this country in company with two hitch-hikers who had travelled with me from Mexico. We were driving south by easy stages, camping on the beaches, swimming and fishing. Both my companions came down with a fever and gave up eating. I had a surplus of food. So when Sam... or Schiller... came walking down the shore looking lost and hungry, I fed him. He'd been all over South America. He gave me his address here in San José and told me I'd be welcome to stay. I took advantage of that offer when I realized that we all three had malaria and came here to the hospital."

He was gazing at me dreamily, not putting any of this on the machine. "That was Brasilitos, in Guanacast, about the 3rd of January," I snapped, and he woke and hit the keys.

"Did he offer you any illegal drugs?"

"No."

"Excellent." The typewriter clattered for a minute. I marvelled at how that simple answer could be expanded.

While he typed my mind wandered back. Drugs? I'd been living in a shadow world so long now, reality and nightmare were entangled. The fever had brought me to the edge of non-existence. I'd had delusions of death and the underworld which made the world of the drug-tripper my familiar territory. Time telescoped or stopped according to a logic I still don't understand. Coincidences loomed over me like omens, people's motives seemed to mean more than they intended. Delirious half the time, I felt the certainty of second sight.

At the hospital in San José our malaria was confirmed. But instead of being admitted we were given tablets to be taken over fourteen days "at home." Not having the money for a hotel, we looked up Sam's address.

It was a dilapidated tenement on the Sabana at the edge of the city. The electricity had been cut off. Many windows were broken. Cooking was done on wood fires in the yard. Malaria makes you sensitive to cold: my companions went to a hotel. I stayed in the room with Sam and some refugees from the coup in Chile. After I had been sleeping for three days, eating nothing but the tablets, my fever started to subside.

"Were you aware that Schiller was selling illicit drugs from those premises?"

"No. As far as I knew he made his living selling jewellery."

"Jewellery?"

"Copper pendants and bracelets made from electrical wire."

"Stolen?"

"Just ends of wire. I supposed they found it in the trash."

"But they didn't buy it in a regular store." He started to type.

"And I thought that was the reason he was afraid of the police."

He stopped and gazed at me. "Please elaborate."

"Because he was selling on the street without a licence."

He plainly thought I was wasting his and the government's time.

"On what occasions did he show fear of the police?"

"The night they arrested us. They looked and they acted like hoodlums, with their guns and motorbike boots and leather jackets. I thought they were going to rob us and kill us. Only Sam, or Schiller, knew who they were and he just stood there unresisting, as if it were fate."

"Guilty conscience," said the clerk as he typed. Then: "One more question: do you now have or have you ever in the past had any dealings with illegal drugs?" Dumbly I shook my head. He beamed and continued as he typed: "In fact, if you had known the truth about Schiller's activities you would have dissociated yourself from him completely and informed the proper authorities, correct?"

"Now that's going a bit too far."

"We have to impress His Honour with your absolute innocence."

"Do you have to make me out to be such a fool?"

"It's only a matter of form. His Honour expects it."

"Then he won't believe it?"

"Of course he'll believe it. You'll sign it under oath."

"If he takes my word under oath, why not say I knew nothing of the drug business and leave it at that?"

"Because the court expects more."

"So I must appear an idiot?"

He sighed and pressed both hands on the desk. "I'm merely trying to point out your good qualities, your respect for the law. The prosecution has already presented your bad side. His Honour will want to know which side is the truth."

"It's not enough to be innocent?"

"Not when you're accused. The Department of Justice is in a state of war against the drug traffickers. If you are drawn into this war you must declare which side you are on. Look at the facts we're presenting to the judge: here's a family man with a wife and children to protect. It's obvious you must support the forces of law and order. You merely have to say so."

"You're reading a lot into my words."

"We have to show you in the best possible light."

"Aren't you afraid the exaggeration will be obvious?"

"Exaggeration?" He blinked as if I'd hurt him. "You're going to sign this under oath. It had better be the truth."

"All right, these are the facts: I was sick and not in my right mind when Sam took me in and looked after me. As to his other activities I know nothing. I'm grateful to Sam. This gratitude is more real than theoretical loyalties to law and order."

He gazed at me dumbly.

"Aren't you going to type this?"

"What have you in common with a drug peddler who corrupts young people and contributes to the breakdown of society?"

I looked over at Sam who had finished his deposition, as if it weren't obvious which of us was the guilty party: his handcuffs were still on, he was barefoot, and his face showed the marks of the beating. "This might be the time," I said, "to lodge a complaint against the police behaviour."

He stared at me with disdain. "Are you alleging that you have been badly treated?"

"Not me—Sam... Schiller. They beat him when they arrested us: he wouldn't hold out his hands for the cuffs: they hit him in the face with motorbike helmets: they kicked him in the groin when he was down."

The clerk looked at me sadly.

"You're not writing this down," I said.

"Why are you damaging your case?" he sighed. "Your statement together with Schiller's confession will certainly get you released in due course. But if you start making unprovable and baseless charges against the police in the performance of their duty you're going to be in for a long and very unpleasant time."

"So you suggest I withhold information about an illegal police action I witnessed?"

"I suggest you let Schiller lay the complaint."

"He's a confessed drug dealer. Who would believe him?"

"For that reason I doubt he'll complain."

"But my testimony could help him. Not only at the time of the arrest, but over the next two days in the police cells, he was repeatedly beaten, deprived of food and water, locked in a box, unable to either sit or stand. That's psychological torture. They wanted him to sign a statement implicating me and another friend. If he had signed that he would have been spared much pain."

The clerk stared at his typewriter. He was a good man and he was embarrassed. But his hands stayed under the desk. "Did you witness any of this?"

"No, he was kept in a separate cell. I saw him when they moved us to the Pen. His face was bruised—look at him, it's still bruised two weeks later—and he could hardly walk."

"There could be other reasons," the clerk said quietly, "sickness, drug abuse, withdrawal."

"He told me what the police had done and why."

"But you didn't witness it."

"No."

"Then you'd better say nothing about it. Let Schiller make the complaint. It might possibly help his case. He's got nothing to lose. It's doubtful if your complaint could help him and you have everything to lose."

I felt a rush of tenderness for Sam... more now than when I watched him being beaten with the helmets, standing helpless with a gun stuck in my face. Till now I had seen him as the cause of my own suffering, the one who was guilty of the crime for which I was punished.

But looking at him now, defeated and silent, still not asking any favours, not even for his shoes, I felt more in common with him than with the righteous men who accused him. I felt singled out and lucky to be sharing this little bit of hardship. It was easy for me: I always knew I'd be released. I knew it with the certainty that only innocence can give. But Sam had ten years to spend in prison. When he got out he'd be 35. You could see he accepted this by the stooped shoulders, listless hanging hands. He had none of that easy arrogance of American whites in their pride of youth; heirs to the mightiest power. He was heir to misery, and he showed it.

I was persuaded to reason at last. I signed the statement complete with its

flowery avowals of moral virginity. I did so with profound self-disgust. The statement over my name bore little connection to anything I had said. It not only disclaimed all knowledge of Sam's crime, it disowned all interest in his fate. I asked the clerk to erase the most offensive phrases. He refused.

Sam stood waiting, tired. I signed. I couldn't look him in the eye. He wasn't looking at me either, even when I was handcuffed to the guard.

We came out under a fresh clear sky. The Palace of Justice glowed in purple floodlights, so tall and simple in design, it deserved the crowd's applause. High up among the stars the tower clock showed midnight. We marched across the deserted parking area. We saw lights on the 16th floor where we had been: no others.

I wondered why justice is so often served in darkness. We were arrested late at night. Sam had been interrogated in the darkness of a closed box: we'd been driven here from the prison late at night.

We sat in the cage in the back of the Land Rover with our hands cuffed to the roof. The guards smoked. They talked quietly; they were waiting for something or someone else. Sam and I gazed up at the stars. We were glad of the fresh air and the scents of tropical blooms. It was a pleasant change from the smells we had gotten used to.

A side door in the Palace of Justice opened and two women came out escorted by police. They walked with a deliberate, provocative feminine swagger which the officers tried to imitate. Our guards started to titter. The women had the lights behind them. They looked like a couple of harlots picked up for soliciting. Sam and I were entranced by their approaching silhouettes. They marched across the tarmac to our Land Rover.

While the guards unlatched the tailgate the women stood regarding us with an interest as friendly as that we felt for them. "So they got you too," one said fraternally. The guards cracked jokes in a vernacular I couldn't follow.

The ladies were not chained. They snuggled up to us on the bench as the vehicle dashed through dimly lighted streets. I was ruffled by the rush of wind and weakened by musky perfume. The girl next to me, half my age, shivered in a skimpy dress and pressed up close for warmth. My chained-up hands encouraged her. She fluttered lashes over dark-rimmed eyes, those deep warm eyes luring me south to my ruin.

She had me worked up to a dangerous temperature by the time we reached the prison. It all led nowhere of course. The guards leered back through the window. If anyone was going to enjoy these queans it would be them: women are always drawn to the men who wield the power.

A howling mob of prison guards swarmed down the steps and surrounded the vehicle. They fought to be the first to hand the dainty ladies down the tailgate, up the steps, and through the iron gates.

Sam and I were left unguarded, chained up for a view of the city. The prison is built on a hilltop. San José is poor, not excessively lighted, so we could see the round hills beyond and the stars undiminished on the vault over our heads. The prison loomed up, twisted, massive, gothic, as intense as anything out of Edgar Allan Poe. Roars of lusty laughter rolled out of its windows and doors.

We were unchained and led inside. The entrance hall where we had been inducted was a scene of pandemonium. The queans turned that degrading rite into a

burlesque—the stripping, fingerprinting, and examination for identifying body scars or birthmarks. It was a striptease about to culminate in nudity as we entered. The guards were packed so tight it was hard to see over their heads.

The queans were slowly rolling down their pantyhose. Their breasts were tiny but well-defined, glistening sweat under the lights. The prison governor, slightly drunk in his best suit, followed the pantyhose down till he was on his knees. I was shoved back to the wall. A roar went up: mockery, applause, frustration: “But these are only men!”

Barely giving them time to get dressed, the mob surged through the inner gates. Sam and I were dragged along behind.

With each clang of steel the shouting ahead of us grew grimmer. They hustled the queans down a passage between the most desperate felons—probably the ones who had pelted us with bricks over the wall of the yard. Up close they were an ugly bunch: faces pressing through the bars, wagging tongues, grinding hips, husky voices screaming. The queans slipped between their fingers, flaunting their charms at every step, swinging their alluring purses, shooting provocative side-glances, shimmying shoulders, showing leg. The stone vault doubled the echoes. It was like feeding time in the piggery, minus the feed.

I don’t know where they were taken. The guards must have kept a private seraglio for special inmates. Sam and I were steered off by another route. The last gate slammed behind us and we breathed the familiar stink of our own yard.

The stars gave a little light. On steps and galleries dim shapes moved, restless sleepers bundled against the chill of concrete. The roars of lust and laughter faded into the recesses of the fortress. From our cells we heard three hundred snores.

I tried not to breathe the stench of the latrines. Just a few more weeks, the clerk had said.

“Do you feel any different?” Sam spoke for the first time in hours. “Do you feel you belong here now?”

“I feel I belong everywhere now.”

“That must be nice,” he said, leading the way barefoot through the yard. “Me, I belong here.”

I followed his tall, stooping back towards the cells. I wanted to tell him, for what little it was worth, that he had made a friend, but I didn’t say it. I was still ashamed. ♦

TWO SHADOWS IN THE NIGHT

The sensuality of the moment
fills the heart
with immeasurable ecstasy.
The smooth definite symmetry of her form
—a beautiful silhouette
against the pale moonlight.
His manhood salutes the moon
for the enhancement of the moment.
Two shadows in the night
embraced in passion, lascivious.
Their bodies bump and grind
to the sound of one lone drum
Their minds are severed
from all conscious thought,
oblivion and ecstasy come,
are one.

2.

What legacy
will we leave from this era:
will the color green be forgotten,
will fresh meat and water
be things of the past?
The dying planet
screams in choked silence
as we continue
to twist and thrust the knife
deeper, deeper into the core.
Where will the children play
when the flowers no longer grow
and streets, dusted with ash
blanket the past.

3.

What is it,
that makes your distrust grow?
Have you lost so much
that for you love is dead,
and all of mankind sheds faces,
like the useless folds of skin
on a snake.
I grieve for you
not because you're lost
but for the ice in your heart
seeming to never melt
in the light of day.

4.

Faceless as the wind
we gather our food,
believing we've been robbed
of all we understood.
Our will broken.
Our needs denied,
all we can believe
is someone has lied.
Like the embers
of a darkening fire,
we lose hope
of fulfilling desire.
We pay a price
not all could stand,
placing all the blame
on the other hand. ❖

CULTURE IN THE BUREAUCRACY: UNIVERSITY IN PRISON

In a number of articles and interventions written over the past decade, the Quebec educator Lucien Morin has directly confronted the main contradiction of education in prison: the pursuit of autonomy and freedom through education in the least free and most dependent of contexts, the modern prison. This confrontation has yielded philosophical clarity on issues which have often been sidestepped by practitioners who, while having put education before punishment in their personal philosophies, have nevertheless failed to address the extent to which they remain within the "carceral archipelago." Morin, drawing on the work of the revisionist historians and philosophers of the last two decades, has demonstrated how education in prison remains tied to the theoretical and practical apparatus of punishment in spite of its liberal claims.

For Morin, the term "correctional education" is itself indicative. Within this phrase lies buried the failure to distinguish between education and education in a correctional perspective. Correctional education draws the educator into the apparatus of normalizing, social scientific discipline with its categorization and labelling of the criminal-to-be-reformed. But as Morin wittily points out, one does not define art by defining sculpture or shoe-making; similarly, education cannot be defined by education in correctional settings. Stressing that we must agree on the nature and mission of education before we define correctional education, Morin proposes an "educative model" based on a reconciliatory philosophy of education cleanly divorced from the apparatus of criminology and justice systems. This model avoids, in principle, the instrumental appropriation of education by prison services. He describes this ideal in his paper "After Foucault: The Educative Model" as a model of "reconciliatory pedagogy which is gratuitous, spontaneous, non-motivated education" (Morin 1981a, 149). In the tradition of reform-minded social Catholicism, this educative model is based on "giving and sharing" in the course of educating men and women to "Judge and judge well." By stressing the common humanity of the prisoner and the universal core of education, Morin hopes to free education in prison from the corrupting influence of its context. In its independence from the logic of rehabilitation and correction, it is comparable to the ideal notion of a liberal arts education. This important critique, which should be collected in an accessible work, cannot be summarized here. I have isolated a single aspect in order to raise the issue of the conditions of good educational practice in prisons. Morin's discussion forms a useful starting point because it is acutely aware of the contradiction of liberal education in the panoptic prison and because it formulates this at the level of principles.

Reprinted with permission from *Yearbook of Correctional Education* (1989). Burnaby: Institute for the Humanities, Simon Fraser University.

That administrators of correctional services remain befuddled and diffident in the wake of Morin's critique is no criticism of Morin. For some time Morin has been one of the very few educators associated with corrections in Canada to address persistently these issues from the perspective of recent radical social thought and philosophy—always from his unique perspective. But his call for a “radical reversal... a sort of one-dimensional leap involving the deconstruction of our most profound existential habits” (Morin 1984) strikes the sympathetic reader as idealistic, as does his call for a reconciliation of education and the prison. Even when addressing the problem of implementation, Morin strikes an idealistic note by calling for the forceful declaration of “human growth as the major aim of penitentiary education” and “by helping teachers help them see themselves as philanthropists” (Morin 1981b, 179). But surely the problem of implementation is a more concrete problem than suggested by a leap of faith or commitment to a sharing pedagogy. However, much is to be gained by taking the resistance of the prison to such a philosophy more seriously. After all, the problem does not lie in the philosophical inadequacies of bureaucrats and politicians but in the very structure of the bureaucracy in this society and its legitimating discourse. The historical critique of the birth of the prison, which is crucial to understanding Morin's ideas, leaves little hope for utopian reform. (Morin is guided by Foucault 1977.) Indeed, humanist reform of the prison has been deeply implicated in the structure of coercion as it developed. Jeremy Bentham's panoptic scheme and John Howard's moral argument for solitary confinement are but two notorious examples. Morin's critique understands this, but can there be any hope of implementing it without implicating it?

This is difficult to answer because Morin fails to raise the question of why a bureaucracy would even entertain his proposal for an educative model; particularly when it is so inconsistent with the model of education he identifies as consistent with the criminal justice system itself—indeed, justice itself. His appeal to a change of heart and understanding is finally an idealist one. It also masks the problem of under what conditions an educative model that refuses the carceral network might realize itself in the prison. This paper is an attempt to explore this problem, for if the radical critique of correctional education is to have practical consequences, the exploration of the practical and theoretical terrain must be undertaken simultaneously.

Fortunately, this exploration is not without a base in corrections itself—at least this is true in Canada. Over the past seventeen years the University of Victoria, and now Simon Fraser University, has operated a liberal arts university program in four Canadian prisons at all levels of security. This program has succeeded in creating a relative oasis of institutional space within the confines of these prisons. At times it has achieved substantial autonomy from the routine of the prison, in part because of a purposively “naive” approach which makes-believe that the ideal university is both practical and has a right to exist. The liberal arts bias and the general pedagogy of the program are reasonably consistent with Morin's point of view. Circumstances and the prudential activities of students and staff have allowed it to survive well beyond the expected lifespan of the progressive-but-doomed-projects so typical of the early seventies. Indeed, Morin holds up this program as a researched project which demonstrates that education in prison does

not have to be correctional. Speaking of the prime movers behind the project, he writes:

And if it is true that the measure of their success is not to be found in employability, deterrence from criminal activity or in a contribution to the security of the prison, the reason is that they have met the demanding objective of fundamental education; that is, educating persons with the ability to judge well. (Morin 1984, 8)

In fact, the university program, like the liberal arts in all universities, has appealed to the logic of achieving social goals through indirect means. It would not be tolerated without the argument that social goals, however defined, were being met; and it would not be tolerated if it attempted to address them by directly challenging the administrative order of the prison. As Morin would undoubtedly agree, however, this is not all of the thrust of liberal education philosophy or his educative model; the form and content of such an education may be quite subversive in relation to its context—many count on it. In any case, it is not an exaggeration to represent the program as embodying a notion of education based on the liberal arts and the ideal of the university. Many academic visitors to the program are attracted by the collegial atmosphere and visibly pine for that lost ideal it seems to represent. In fact, to the extent this has been achieved, it is the product of a very cautious institutional practice and certain gaps provided by the particular discourse and structure of this particular bureaucratic subsystem. In other words, the institutional space that has been carved out of the neat hierarchy of the prison is the dominant means by which the pursuit of our educational ideal is possible—not the reverse. To demonstrate this it would necessary to reconstruct the history of this project (See Duguid 1979, 1980). That cannot be attempted here. Instead, this paper will discuss some of the more abstract conditions of possibility of such a program's existence; in particular, by analyzing an aspect of the ideological discourse of the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) with respect to operating educational programs in prison. Practical considerations will emerge from this critique which, hopefully, will give added substance to Morin's working model. Necessarily, the following question must also be raised: do these conditions of possibility only create an "artificial negativity" that undercuts any substantial claim to actually subvert the detrimental effects of the carceral—*avec* Foucault, not *après* Foucault?

Morin's analysis centers on the statement of purpose produced by the CSC regarding prison education. He summarizes it as follows:

Thus the purpose of correctional education is to deter from future criminal activity, to improve employability and literacy and to contribute to the security of the prison... (The CSC) supposes that to educate in prison is identical with the end of corrections. (Morin 1984, 3)

As Morin points out, this notion of education is rooted in "normalizing" disciplines like psychology, sociology, and criminology. All education in prison becomes correctional for it is subordinated to the extra-educational ends and methodologies of these disciplines and their particular approaches to rehabilitation and correction. Not

surprisingly, then, these guidelines are well-suited to the administration of prisons. They help fulfil the more general goals of corrections—to incarcerate, rehabilitate, and keep secure—and appear to do so in a perfectly functional way. Viewed this way, it would appear that it is categorically impossible for these functions to adopt the educative model presented by Morin. As Morin's analysis shows, correctional education as defined by these principles is deeply imbricated in the processes of categorization and accusation that continue well after the sentence of the prisoner has been assigned. The trial continues throughout the length of the sentence and often beyond—and not always in conditions of fairness and impartiality.

Education, in Morin's sense, cannot take place; rather, it is the "inversion of education," for no other reason (and there are many) than that the criminal has been reified in his "personality" or pathology by the objectifying approach brought to corrections by a certain kind of social science. Morin has exposed the assumptions about education underlying the correctional model of education by appealing to a new, anthropological understanding of justice as a discourse on violence. In understanding the deep connections between justice and violence, categorization and accusation, Morin asks the prison system to make a leap of faith in favour of an opposed pedagogy. But surely the concrete source of these assumptions—whatever the relationship of justice and violence—is the bureaucratic necessity to integrate education within the rationally pursued goals of the criminal justice system in one subsystem, the prison. From this point of view, the statement of purpose is a very functional one because it assists in preserving the carceral archipelago itself; not because certain careers and personal interests bend the goals of education to their will, as many bureaucratic managers demand it. Form and function, ends and means, are integrated in a manner capable of being legitimated by socially acceptable norms emanating from the political domain. Education is reconciled by fiat to the function of the administration of prison; it simply becomes correctional. Why is this so? Practically and theoretically this can be usefully illuminated by briefly turning to contemporary theories of bureaucracy in the Weberian tradition.

Modern state bureaucracies are based on the administration of official business under the rule of law. Since Weber, it is well known that bureaucratic decision making tends to be inflexible, subject as it is to the principle of formal or instrumental rationality. Weber saw the latter as strategies of quantification and calculability that allow for universal applicability regardless of the context of action. (A good, short discussion of Weber's theory of bureaucracy can be found in Polan 1984.) In administrative systems and subsystems like the prison, the concrete activity and qualities of the subject individual are subsumed by the principles of operation. The wider cultural and social implications of Weber's theory have been drawn out by certain traditions within "Western Marxism," notably the School of Critical Theory associated with Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno.

Critical Theory developed out of the appropriation of Weber's theory of rationalization (the implementation of instrumental reason in various social domains) by George Lukacs. He took it one step further by associating it with Marx's commodity fetishism in the theory of reification (Lukacs 1971). Here relationships between people are treated as relationships between things in the process of capitalist development. This radical version implied the complete victory of formal rationality and

"the end of reason," as Max Horkheimer would later put it. As bureaucracy inexorably spread its wings, the individuals standing in its shade became ever more alienated in the artificial and standardized dawn of man. This strain of thought would ultimately culminate in a radical version of convergence theory, in which all modern and modernizing states are succumbing to an wholly administered existence. In anticipation of many of the themes of Foucault's work, the School of Critical Theory, adapting the work of Weber and Lukacs, proposed a vision of modernity in which the prison could be presented as the mirror of contemporary societies. In this image, those who fail to accept freely the internal moral constraints of bourgeois society are forcibly constrained in a panoptic architecture which models this relationship of man to his conscience.

Man in prison is the virtual image of the bourgeois type he still has to become in reality. Those who cannot manage outside are forcibly held in a terrible state of purity in prison. (Horkheimer and Adorno 1973, 226)

This ironic view of the internal connections between society and imprisonment seems to lead, through a process of inversion, to the inevitable conclusion that the prison is a metaphor for our increasingly administered existence on the outside. The intellectually popular thesis of "the end of man" and the populist rage of Rambo are two common responses to this dialectic.

Criticisms that have been levelled at the thesis of absolute bureaucratization, most notably from within the tradition of Critical Theory (Habermas 1984; Polan 1984, 98–112), have sought to explore contradictions in the process of rationalization in order to thematize possible openings in this inexorable process. An interesting example develops out of Western Marxism's linking of instrumental rationality to the processes of commodification in a capitalist society (Offe 1984). According to Claus Offe, although the following is quite a simplification of his thesis, the state is often forced into contradictions by its precise function in capitalist society. Where goods and services are distributed through the mechanisms of a market (the process which realizes them as commodities), the state has historically taken an even larger role in correcting the subsequent imbalances and revealed contradictions. In responding to these crises, the state is caught between offering services which "try to maintain and to restore exchange opportunities" where the market has "failed," and structuring these services so that they function as "supportive mechanisms of the commodity form" (Offe 1984, 143). In the former it meets certain needs which fall outside the imperatives of commodity production, whereas in the latter case it attempts to "improve" the ability of capital or labour to participate in the commodity sphere.

A dual and inconsistent standard of "goodness" of policy-making results from this structure. Policies will be measured both by the exchangeability they produce for labour and capital and by their promise to satisfy needs of people through alternative, non-market means of social production. The very concepts of health (the ability to work versus physical well-being), education (the marketability of labour power versus personality development) and all the other social services are characterized by this dual reference to the commodity form and to need. (Offe 1984, 144)

A major problem for the state in this situation is to legitimate its policies in such a way that it meets the interests of both types of concern (Offe 1984, 268). The statement of purpose of education in prison clearly subordinates education to the needs of the institution (security) and the not uncommon state policy of increasing the saleability of labour power through education and training. But as Offe points out, the administrative form of settling an education policy and the norms which guide it is far more problematical than the commodity form of social organization (Offe 1984, 140–41). In the latter case the market settles the issue automatically, as it were, whereas in the former case policy must be subjected to “discursive will-formation”—conflict over norms and values in political and community debate (Polan 1984, 65). And because there is no accepted formula (or communicative as opposed to instrumental rationality) by which it could be decided what is to be learned at school or which region gets the new prison, it is not unusual for the very commodity form itself to be at issue. One need only think of current debates over university funding, welfare funds, transition houses, and so on, to see key questions raised. Should standards of efficiency implied by the marketplace be served or alternative needs and social purposes? Should social policy be subordinated to the logic of the marketplace? Whose interests are thus served? The local debate over university in prison, whether or not student-prisoners should pay fees, or whether literacy and vocational training are more fundamental needs, is only another example of this. For practical purposes, the instrumental rationality characteristic of both the commodity form and the bureaucratic function is the real terrain of the struggle over education in prison; it is towards the questions of needs and their interpretation that controversy and reform will gravitate. Unfortunately, the issue of education in prison is pulled in other directions by the constant debate over punishment, clouding public perception of the issues. Nevertheless, statements of purposes, however functional and rational in this narrow sense, are subject to policy changes, the difficulty of meeting the ambiguous requirements of rehabilitation, and the need to legitimate the day-to-day operation of the prison. In policy statements and operational codes the attempt by correctional systems to mediate these pressures can be clearly seen.

Of course statements of policy tend to function as overarching guidelines. Their implementation is another matter. It is at the operational level that the theory and practice of integrating policy and performance are carried out. Certain operative ideals, or models, mediate the relations amongst the prison, prisoner, and community by giving direction to policy. (See the discussion of models in Canadian and American corrections in Griffiths and Ekstedt 1984, 66–75.) These models embody recognizable philosophies of corrections that legitimate as well as orient the practice of corrections. These legitimations are as much “in-service” as they are meant for the general population; also, they undoubtedly represent the balance of forces within the state itself—but this cannot be addressed here.

Of the plethora of models found in the theory and practice of incarceration, none has ever achieved complete hegemony. Within the prison the dominant model, or operative ideal, is called the opportunities model. (See *Role of Federal Corrections in Canada* for the original elaboration of this model.) It was preceded by the medical

model (or therapeutic or treatment model), which viewed the prisoner as sick but capable of being cured—usually by “experts.” The medical model’s most enduring legacy is the euphemism “correctional” itself and the lesson, albeit a negative one, that a cure cannot be coerced. Its decline does not imply its disappearance, however, any more than the early modern preference for punishing the body has disappeared. Nevertheless, the impact of the medical model’s decline can be measured by the decline of the rehabilitative ideal which accompanied it. The rehabilitative ideal, although it still remains one of the basic directives of corrections in Canada, had been mortally wounded by linking programs to punitive measures; that is, to prison itself. Parole and various privileges were often contingent on participation in these programs, irredeemably compromising them. Robert Martinson, surveying the state of the rehabilitative art in 1973, concluded by coining the new incantation: “Nothing works” (Martinson 1974). This was always already known, but a scientific judgement certified it once and for all, neglecting altogether the question of the kind of science involved in these problems. For if the scientific gaze was a labelling and accusatory one, then it helped create and perpetuate the carceral; it couldn’t possibly be rehabilitative—as Morin, following Foucault and Girard, has shown.

In 1974 a book influential with professionals in the field and prisoner reform groups was published: Norval Morris’s *The Future of Imprisonment* (1974). It attempted to separate rehabilitation from the medical model. Morris’s essential point was simply that if change cannot be coerced, it must nevertheless be facilitated through the provision of opportunities to the volunteer participant. Basic principles of fair play and justice demanded that the possibility of rehabilitation must not be withdrawn from the prisoner even if “prison behavior is not a predictor of community behavior.” All the prison can do is offer programs and confine the individual. Leaving aside the observation that nothing in prison can ever be entirely voluntary, this proposed solution to the dilemmas of treatment in a coercive setting had its strengths. Coercion is less overt from the point of view of the prisoner, and the proactive claims of the prison service are reduced to manageable proportions. Liberal forces were mollified too—they were losing the rehabilitative mission, but they were gathering the rhetoric of rights and liberality itself, for these opportunities were offered in a “humane and fair” spirit.

In Canada, the Task Force on the Creation of an Integrated Canadian Corrections Service took up the theme of the opportunities model in *The Role of Federal Corrections in Canada* (1977). It was proposed in this report, and largely accepted in practice, that the CSC would provide opportunities via education, counselling, vocational training, psychological services, and so on; the prisoner would choose to avail himself of them. Nothing could be more liberal, rational, or realistic. Although reality never fully approximated the model, it became the rationalizing principle behind policy. The principles behind it seemed so benign that hardly anyone noticed the fact that it too secretly refused to put itself in context, as had the medical model before it. Whereas the latter had ignored the basic structure of imprisonment and its share in it, the former would ignore its deep ideological and social roots in society. It would also uncouple itself from the demand to provide successful rehabilitation, making legitimization of all its activities far easier. Listing a few of the components is almost sufficient to expose its basic assumptions:

- The opportunities principle is based on the assumption that the offender is ultimately responsible for his behaviour [and is not based on]... some underlying personality disorder or deprived socioeconomic condition. (*Role*, 31)
- Federal Corrections should... strive for a relationship with offenders based on a system of incentives and rewards proportionate to the expressed desire, demonstrated effort and achievement of the inmate. (*Role*, 51)
- The opportunities must be diversified and relevant in today's society. (*Role*, 76)
- The Program Opportunities Model makes the offender responsible for changing his conduct, provides Federal Corrections with a realistic goal rather than an unattainable goal of changing offender behaviour; and does not lead the public to believe that Federal Corrections can resolve the problem of crime. (*Role*, 77)
- The great majority of offenders are held to know and appreciate the nature and quality of their actions; that is, they possess a full appreciation of the consequences of their actions, the ability to choose alternative courses of action, and the capacity to formulate an intent when considering whether or not to commit a criminal offence. (*Role*, 32)
- [A]n offender should retain all the rights of an ordinary citizen, except those that are expressly taken away from him by statute, or that he loses as a necessary consequence of incarceration. (*Role*, 49)

These components are not comprehensive, but they suggest a classic social model guiding the design of the whole edifice: a picture of man and society as envisaged by the social contract tradition, a tradition deeply embedded in the rise of the middle class in a market society. Men are viewed as egoistic, autonomous, and rational individuals who come freely together to create civil society (the sphere of self-regulation). In this setting, the individual is responsible for his actions and is equal before the law, regardless of socioeconomic status or character. The function of punishment, of course, is to preserve these arrangements. Strictly speaking, any punishment which violates the consensus of values established in civil society by pursuing ends which contradict these values (for example, an imposed "cure") is illegitimate. This partakes of the language of rights. The extension of even residual rights to prisoners is controversial, threatening as it does the discretion of the administration over the prisoner. Still, residual rights were granted in principle, even if they sometimes lacked precision, as evidenced by the establishment of inmate committees and grievance procedures introduced on the heels of the report.

A utilitarian element also asserts itself strongly within the report. Punishment will be proportional to the nature of the crime and the interests violated. Moreover, "useful" activity must be rewarded and "destructive" activity punished. This is nothing less than an extrapolation from a certain view of the marketplace, where competing self-interested, rational men and women pursue the goals of self-posses-

sion and the possession of things, and where ethical standards are henceforth rooted in legitimate pursuit of property and personal well-being. (See Hobsbawm 1962 for a historical discussion on the relation of utilitarian and “natural rights” traditions in bourgeois social thought.) The field of opportunities becomes the market and the distribution of justice the reward. It also sneaks the psychology behind all the behavioural modification programs of the medical model back into practice. The idea “that virtuous conduct can be made habitual through the routinization of behaviour,” as historian Michael Ignatieff puts it, also has its roots in a classic conception—the environmentalism of John Locke that inspired prison reformers like Bentham and Howard. By linking this standby to the marketplace of opportunities it is clearly hoped that rehabilitation will take place—but “spontaneously” and without having to claim that the prison can “resolve the problem of crime.”

Introducing these elements in a controlled environment allows the CSC to have it both ways. The prisoner is classed as a rational individual but inducements exist to ensure that the functionalist goals of the administration are not compromised; that is, the instrumental rationality of the principle of utility is not entirely compromised by flirting with notions of right. A popular ideological version of social reality (the free market) is introduced which paradoxically legitimates the intervention of the state (via the prison) as a kind of framework of activity in the rational distribution of goods (justice). The prisoner is granted his reason, but of course he is wrong. Having failed in one market, he is confined to a new one, but his behaviour here may allow him to re-enter the original at a later date. The entire apparatus of movement to different security levels, parole, transfer, recommendation, case management, psychiatric assessment, and obligatory work remain—but no rehabilitative claims are made for it! The prisoner simply tries to straighten out his act in a controlled environment that is reputedly a map of the larger context; a map that he presumably can read. Reality, viewed ideologically, becomes the operative ideal of the modern prison. The truth in Horkheimer and Adorno’s “A Theory of Crime,” which represents the prison as a ghastly, embodied form of “bourgeois purity,” quoted above, leaps to the eye. In the opportunities model, the prison itself becomes a field of opportunities in which useful and destructive behaviour also gets its just deserts.

Social contract and utilitarian models, and their hybrids, posit a moral consensus and the natural permanence of existing mechanisms for the distribution of power and property. This led to the classic problem for classical theory: a system of justice based on the principles of equality is only consistent with a society in which property and power are distributed evenly. In this perspective, problems for the very liberal opportunities model immediately surface. In spite of the principle of equality (of opportunity and before the law), men and women might still be imprisoned by virtue of social injustice. Moreover, the justification of imprisonment and the management of the sentence necessarily participate in that possibility, as Morin shows in a different way. The very language of the Task Force report portrays the correctional institution as a neutral object in the social field. Not only does it ignore the context of the administration of justice as it has emerged historically and ideologically, but it duplicates this ignorance by refusing to consider itself seriously as a context for the “irrational” behaviour of the imprisoned. The result is magnified further when we consider, as Morris pointed out, that recidivism is a function of imprisonment.

The age of the prisoner, the availability to him on release of reasonably remunerative employment and of a supportive domestic environment are closely related to his avoidance of crime, but these are not circumstances over which the prisoner by his own efforts in prison has very much control. (Morris 1974, 47)

In short, prison separates men and women from the very social ties that bind them to the lifeworld of society; prison is a condition of its own existence. The liberal justification of penal policy simply masks the perpetuation of the same prison. The opportunities model, by participating in the ideological world of the commodity form of organization, guarantees that its policies are not in conflict with its context.

Although this analysis of the assumptions of the opportunity model only confirms the suspicion that all levels of the prison bureaucracy are functionally dependent on the larger social and ideological context, it points to an interesting contradiction. Bureaucratic practice in prison does not rely on a strict theory of instrumental rationality to justify its operative ideals. It cannot merely appeal to efficiency or other attributes of the successful bureaucracy, nor can it simply appeal to the instrumentally oriented statement of purpose of education in prison. Its rationalizations do not "consciously" contradict the instrumental rationality of the bureaucracy, but they do appeal to the traditions and values responsible for their behaviour; and that prisoners retain some rights even while incarcerated appeals to a liberal utopia that never melded comfortably with the more radical strains of utilitarianism implicit in the modern penitentiary model. The opportunities model, which emerged in the wake of the collapse of the medical model, took up a less radical position, ideologically speaking, but transferred much of the apparent responsibility onto the individual prisoner. The norms and values represented by that discourse now possess more than a shadowy existence, for through this operative ideal they enter the actual operation of the prison. The opportunities principle, for all its bad faith in failing to thematize its relationships to its overall context, nevertheless justifies its existence on the grounds that the CSC "has adopted a more pragmatic approach that is both fair and humane to the offender." These are the criteria it must, in part, legitimate by offering programs that speak to this concern, whatever practical obstacles it might put in place.

More importantly, the opportunities model leaves an institutional space at the heart of its discourse. It may make a definite analogy to the world of the marketplace and thus the commodity form of organization, but it must remain an administratively controlled environment subject to normative interpretations of what constitutes "useful" activity. Although this is precisely the element of control, it is also, paradoxically, the element through which the prison opens up onto the community. For instance, the opportunities model was formulated in the context of creating "an integrated CSC," which would include the old Penitentiary Service and the National Parole Service. A curious sidelight of this was that much of the coercion residing in the medical model was concentrated in the Parole Board, for the criteria of release, as Griffiths and Ekstedt show, remained similar to those employed under the medical model (Griffiths and Ekstedt 1984, 238). Clearly, a prisoner was better off "volunteering" for a program that could be viewed as rehabilitative rather than exercising the choice granted him by the opportunities model and "doing his time." But

this also re-introduced the notion of rehabilitation through the back door, in slightly new garb. The claim of the prison to diagnose and treat the criminal was undercut by the principles of the opportunities model, and thus the definition of what constituted rehabilitation or what programs might offer it was left open to the choices of inmates and historical accident (as to what programs existed, etc.). Ironically, something like the notion of equivalent exchange was introduced into the carceral. The illusion of choice, the right to choice, and relative non-coercion began to exert itself.

In these circumstances, the opportunities for exercising responsible choice remain structured by administrative policies subject to scrutiny and the interpretation of needs. This utilitarian element is contradicted by the argument from rights and responsibility with the opportunities vision of the free market, albeit in an ambiguous fashion. It grants the prisoner a certain responsibility, however artificial, and because it does not radically circumscribe the interpretation of needs, the ideological content of the opportunities model contradicts a purely instrumental implementation of policy. In the concrete setting of some British Columbia prisons, the historical presence of a university program based on a liberal arts model is a sign of the contradiction between a pure instrumental rationality on the one hand, and a passive, almost laissez-faire support for possible alternative versions of educational practice. This is a condition of possibility of the educative model à la Morin, but it works in two ways. The opportunities model uncouples programs from the demand to rehabilitate, while the utilitarian element implicit in parole structures demands the appearance of rehabilitation. An empirical if negative proof of this is the public resistance mounted to overturn the decision to cancel all post-secondary education in Canadian prisons. Given the reputed rehabilitative success of the program, this decision seemed to violate both principles. Once the Solicitor General and his ministry were forced to defend publicly the cancellation in terms of already accepted principles of operation, the political desire to cut costs and the desire of the bureaucracy to impose universally an isomorphic educational structure in line with the statement of purpose for Canadian prisons were frustrated—for the moment. “The dual and inconsistent standard of ‘goodness’ of policy making” has found one path into the prison through the practical application of the opportunities principle and its attendant ideology.

Of course the possibility of establishing programs that embody significant alternative approaches depends on finding an appropriate institutional form. This is the great discovery and virtue of the SFU Humanities Program, because a form must be found which can accommodate the principles of education one wishes to promote. The Task Force report that recommended the opportunities model also recommended that efforts be made to draw the community into the prison. This was consistent with the avowed aim of offering comparable programs to those found outside the prison (*Role of Federal Corrections in Canada* 1977). The university is an ideal institution in this instance. It embodies the ethic of liberal arts more than any other, it possesses as much institutional “weight” as the prison, and it offers tremendous legitimating potential. Most post-secondary programs, however, have tended to consist of instructors from campus travelling to the prison, offering their course under the watchful eye of correctional staff, and departing. The SFU Humanities Program, however, developed an organizational base out of an attempt to emulate a campus in

the prison. An equal advantage, which has not been discussed here, is that this program had already implanted itself in the prison in the dog days of the medical model—in fact, it was notable in participating in the attack on the medical model. As Corrections drifted into the opportunities model, which the Task Force simply ratified and raised to the level of a principle, the university program was already an opportunity in waiting. This alternative community (the campus), which is structured as democratically as possible, is the indispensable precondition for the realization of any educative model. No discussion concerning the establishment of alternative educational programs in prisons can avoid addressing the following components of organization.

- Programs must match a notion of education as described by Morin with relative institutional autonomy. University programs are ideal in this regard because they carry the standards of accreditation, staffing, and independent ethics of the university with them into the field of the prison. The standards of “correctional” education thus remain external to the actual education offered—in spite of the rhetoric of agreement. Therefore...
- The myth of the liberal arts university must be subscribed to and upheld without qualification as it underwrites the process of education sought by Morin and the appropriate organizational form. Thus...
- Formal links with parole, case management, and the apparatus of incentives must be avoided. The community of teachers and students attempt to function as a whole in relationship to the institution wherever possible. Thus...
- Within limits to be determined in each case, a democratic, alternative community must be established within the program. (See Duguid 1981, 421–38; Nelson and Hoekema 1981, 305–20.)

To conclude, cultural autonomy within the prison can only be achieved if a degree of institutional autonomy is created and the opening for such a venture can be found within the operating principles of the prison.

It would be naive, however, to assume that the opportunities model is the benign and passive operative ideal it often appears to be. It could be suggested that it merely creates a more flexible means of incorporating the felt needs of student-prisoners into the functioning of the prison by “softening” the coercive experience of the prison itself. This “repressive tolerance,”¹ as Herbert Marcuse would describe it, would accomplish the smooth operation of the prison by quelling some of these felt needs, while assimilating any potential for dissent arising in the alternative community by a thoroughgoing liberalism based on the opportunities model. Indeed, the university would become a part of the carceral itself; not by subscribing to “correctional” education, but by legitimating prison education in the eyes of “clients” who by definition are “unwilling participants, held in the system against their will” (*Role of Federal Corrections in Canada*, 108). Within the prison, it could well be the case that the equivalent exchange ideology ironically implicit in the opportunities model

will have real effect, producing its own reification of the virtues of the university and individual choice. The next stage of development lies in confronting this problem; and it will likely involve the transition to a new concept of correctional education rather than a further justification of educative models. The opportunities model puts the onus on the individual prisoner. The educative model and its liberal arts equivalents put the onus on individual development. In doing so the educative model avoids, as Morin has shown, the reification of the criminal implicit in the correctional perspective. But is the result a commitment to a new kind of "bourgeois purity" which ultimately ratifies the ideological and social context of this particular bureaucratic subsystem, the prison? If the culture in the bureaucracy is to survive, the turn must be made towards the collective appropriation of the notion of rehabilitation. In this way the community of prisoners might break the game of mirrors played out in the funhouse. ♦

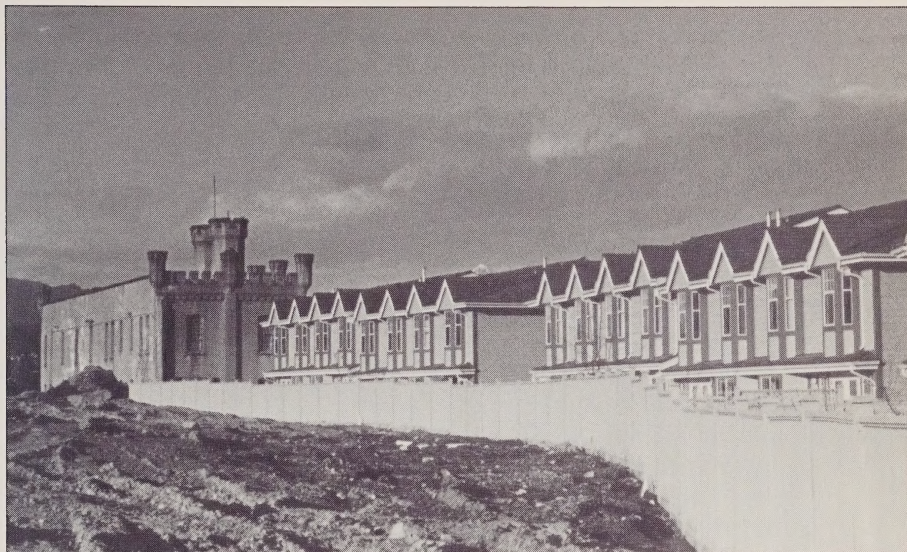
NOTE

¹ This notion, and Piccone's "artificial negativity" (Piccone 1978), remind us of the considerable limits on reforming practice within the bureaucratic systems of modern society. The historical analysis found in Foucault is even less hopeful.

REFERENCES

- Ayers, J. Douglas, ed. 1981. *Proceedings of the National Conference on Prison Education: Its Role and Practice in the Modern Penitentiary*. Victoria: Division of University Extension, University of Victoria.
- Duguid, Stephen. 1979. "History and Moral Development in Correctional Education." *Canadian Journal of Higher Education* 4 (4): 81-92.
- . 1980. "Post-Secondary Education in a Prison: Theory and Praxis." *Canadian Journal of Criminology* 23 (4) 421-38.
- . 1981. "Prison Education and Criminal Choice: The Context of Decision-Making." *Canadian Journal of Criminology* 23 (4): 421-38.
- Foucault, Michel. 1977. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Griffiths, Curt T., and John W. Ekstedt. 1984. *Corrections in Canada: Policy and Practice*. Toronto, Butterworth.
- Habermas, Jurgen. 1984. *The Theory of Communicative Action*. Vol. 1, *Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. Boston: Beacon Press.

- Hobsbawm, Eric J. 1962. *The Age of Revolution, 1789–1848*. New York: Mentor.
- Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor W. Adorno. 1973. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. London: Allen Lane.
- Ignatieff, Michael. 1978. *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750–1850*. New York: Pantheon.
- . 1981. "Moral Education as a Reform Movement: An Historian's Perspective." In Ayers 1981.
- Lukacs, George. 1971. *History and Class Consciousness*. London: Merlin Press.
- Morin, Lucien. 1981a. "After Foucault: The Educative Model." In Ayers 1981.
- . 1981b. *On Prison Education*. Ottawa: Canadian Government Publishing Centre.
- . 1984. "Education or the Violence of Justice," *Occasional Papers on Prison Education*. Burnaby: Institute for the Humanities, Simon Fraser University.
- Morris, Norval. 1974. *The Future of Imprisonment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Nelson, Jacquelyn, and Hendrik Hoekema. 1981. "Kohlberg Concretized: The Practice of Moral Development in the Prison University." In Ayers 1981.
- Offe, Claus. 1984. *Contradictions of the Welfare State*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Piccone, Paul. 1978. "The Crisis of One-Dimensionality." *Telos* 35.
- Polan, A.J. 1984. *Lenin and the End of Politics*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- The Role of Federal Corrections in Canada: A Report of the Task Force on the Creation of an Integrated Canadian Corrections Service*. 1977. Ottawa: Ministry of Solicitor General.



THE GULAG AND FRASERVIEW PARK

The penitentiary perpetuates the economic and social organization of a medieval burg within the modern city. Designed to allow hundreds of men to live and die sequestered within its walls—not by freely accepted discipline as in monasteries, but under brutal constraint—it is a dreary city at once besieged and dominated by the enemy within.

—Victor Serge, *Men in Prison*

I was jarred by the remnants of the old BC Pen sitting amidst a residential development in New Westminster. I stood behind a plaqueless stone cairn, looking north from Columbia Street. Wide stairs directed my gaze upwards beyond the upright bars of an iron fence, beyond a pair of disorderly weeping willows to a huge black door. In the door's ebony gloom, faint grey lines traced the outline of a thunderbolt and the word BAD. The entrance to the old penitentiary gatehouse now rots in a gash of torn earth juxtaposed with curving rows of pastel condominiums. In my birthplace, the Soviet Union, the separation between prison and society is often far less distinct.

I was little more than fifteen years old when I first understood that I had been born in jail. (Jail is a fitting metaphor for communist Russia.) I was suffocated by my society's many restrictions—little freedom of movement, few intellectual and vocational choices, and minimal access to reliable information. To profess religious

belief was forbidden. Creative expression underwent cruel communist censorship. Non-conformists suffered heartless repression.

Many refused to accept the life sentence imposed upon them. However, their attempts to change conditions met with little success, so people chose escape instead. The easiest way out was with alcohol and/or drugs. Another way to escape was to endeavour to create an alternate reality: to live an esoteric underground life outside official control. This way of life resembled Hesse's glass bead game, in which a philosophical world is erected in a void.

This counterculture rejected all mainstream ideas and methods while embracing the new and the experimental, idolizing all things Western in a search for a separate identity. It was realized mostly through art and criticism that reflected the lifestyle and social activity of its members. Members composed and played music, wrote, and created art. Recording studios found homes in private apartments as did theatrical plays and art exhibitions. Many books and magazines were published. While underground, these activities were not subsumed by mainstream culture.

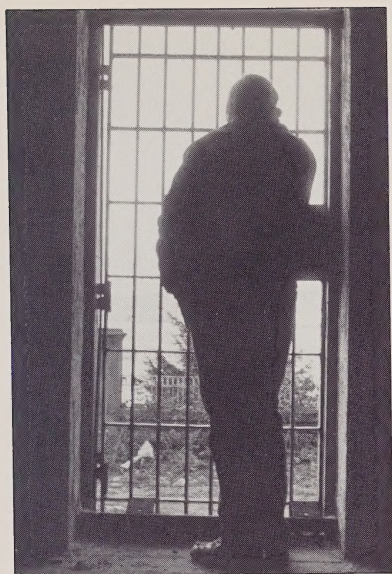
However, the underground's failure to effect any real change in its society exacerbated by the horror of Afghanistan caused many members of the counterculture to move toward a more apolitical and asocial ideology. Intellectual interest became disinterest; acts of negation turned to alienation. Reality was too frightening and bloody. As one punk-hero from Siberia vowed: "I will be contrary forever."

Even Gorbachev's glasnost, which promises much, has delivered little. And the increased artistic freedom has created a schism within the counterculture as it is assimilated by the mainstream. Yet some counterculturalists have attempted to maintain their intellectual independence by living in ever greater isolation. The ideal of negation still exists. Indeed for some, like the punk-hero from Siberia, it has become their *raison d'être*.

Thus I have chosen to escape the confines of Soviet society and have abandoned it. I have been in Canada for almost six months and life seems quite different here. However, restrictions also exist here and I am unsure of my place in society. Perhaps alienation is man's natural condition and I shall be contrary forever. ❖

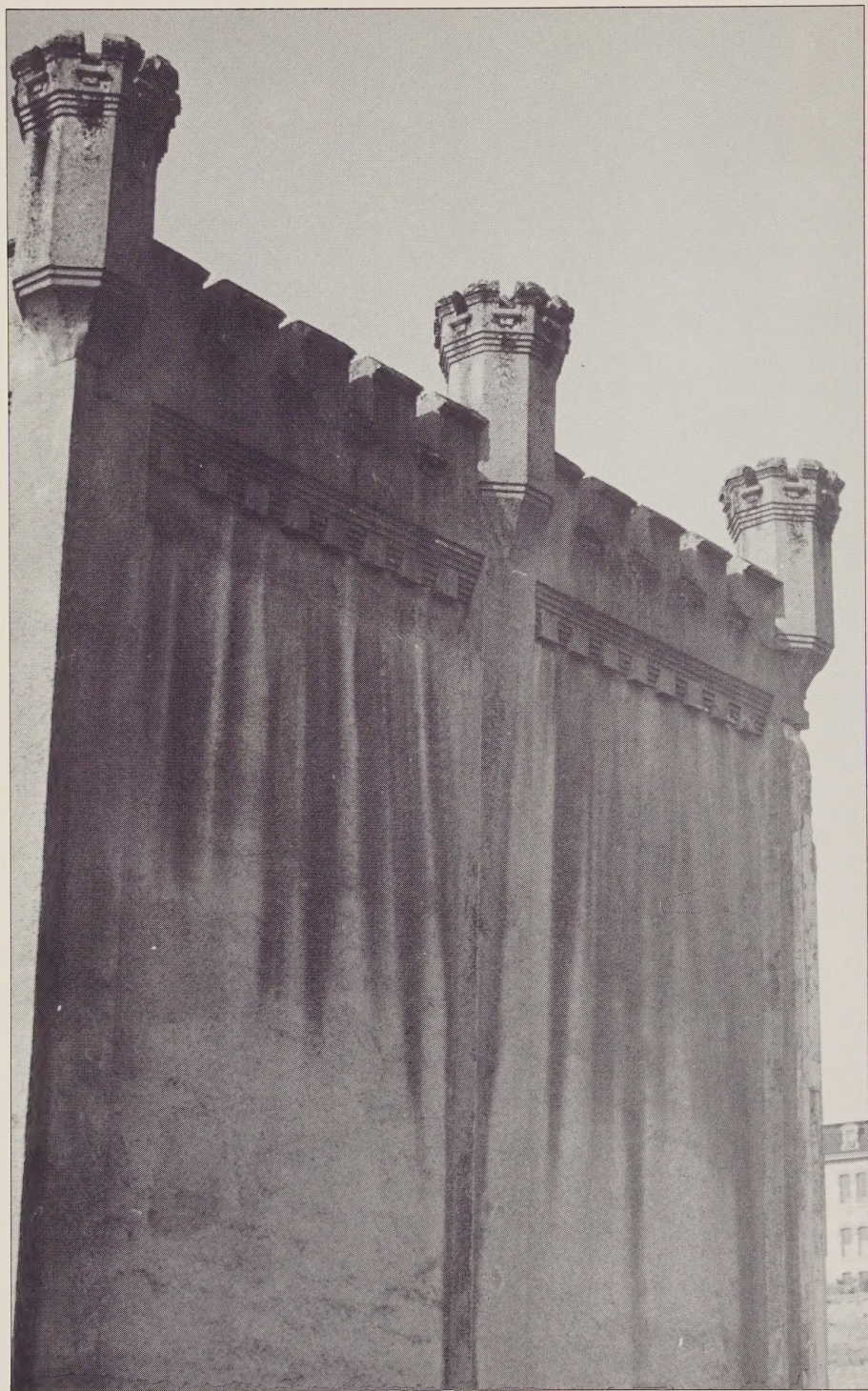












ORIGINAL LANGUAGE

Machines sobbing
crush the asphalt

I chew over a certain pain

voices
outside
in the world
old fantasies
already born
already aborted
strain upwards
between my legs
like flesh
with filthy fingernails

I chew over a certain pain

filthy nails
black
shiny nails
red
I bleed
ephemeral images
death rattle in chorus
my tongue
swollen to the nth degree
bursts
a thick fluid
drowns the supreme attempt
to articulate
a-r-t-i-c-u-l-a-t-e
a meaning

I have forgotten all

my weapon is dead
the future does not exist.

PROTRACTED WAR

To move anything out of place is prohibited
to open or close a blind is prohibited
prohibited to touch that thick layer of dust
that accumulates
little by little
on surfaces
and corners
luxurious
as a deep Asian rug

To throw out garbage is prohibited
to flush the toilet is prohibited
EVERYTHING must remain intact
in this den
only refuge
from the sudden attack
of life, advancing
presumptuously

Keep calm
stay sane
breathe deeply
file those pianist's nails
strengthen that jaw
practice arming
disarming
eyes closed

When the moment comes
anxiously awaited
desperately wanted
I'll defend myself with these arms

Resist
with this body of a woman in heat
and throw tampons
to the world
time bombs
dripping with blood and womb

Until Final Victory.

WORKING CLASS CHILEAN KID IN VANCOUVER 1988

My name's Alex
I came with my family
I was eight
I remember
nothing clear
shooting in the streets
my dad in jail
and then leaving home

yeah it was hard man
didn't speak English
nobody in the family spoke English
my parents were janitors
you know
it was hard for them
we wanted to be there
we couldn't
were here
a different world

yeah sure
now this is my real home
but That's my REAL home
you know
I mean
take my mom
she's been here for thirteen years man
she can't hardly speak English
and me
school was boring
I didn't do good
it was my own fault
I know
I didn't get my education
now I got a job
nothing great
but it's a job
can put some money together
you know

I'll go back
there's a spark there
in the youth
you know
the youth are fighting man
they are on the streets
the spark is growing
you know what I mean

let me tell you something
the last time I was there
I went to the jail
saw the political prisoners
they were so friendly man
so open
like a family
I got a thing in my throat man
you know
they are struggling there man
not two hours a day no man
twenty-four hours a day
a hundred percent man
that's what I wanna do
be there
a hundred percent
there is a spark there
and it's growing
Chile will be another Nicaragua man
His left fist goes up
as the spark in his eyes
grows toward us
combustible spark
a hundred percent
contagious
inflammatory spark
growing from his eyes
and into my gut
the spark
burns now
a hundred percent
burns
a hundred percent
burns.

THE MIRROR

I never knew your real name. You were Christina and you'll stay Christina in my memory; Christina, fragile form, faltering breath, Christina, child's face with huge, frightened eyes.

It was said that there were terrorists, that they were heartless, relentless. It was also said that the military tortured people; so many things were said, but I never thought... You know very well that I don't condone violence—how often we discussed it. When Juanita and Miguel approached me to ask whether I'd take you in, I had to accept. They said you were dying. Everything imaginable had been done to you, as well as everything unimaginable. It never occurred to me that there would be doctors right there, during the sessions themselves, to stop the torturer at the crucial instant, that fragile line that separates life from death.

How often in the theatre, I had to act out that very moment; how often I mentally reviewed my own life, blended with the life of my character, to arrive at that moment when the spirit separates from the body and floats away; how often I lived it on stage, but to such an extent that I had to use all my strength to go back again and continue living as myself, as Clara.

And there you were in this suspended state, not on stage, but in a torture chamber. They put you there, the target of a sick violence that had been contrived and designed, studied and put into practice by minds and hands like those of any other human being—hands like these that took you in that cold August night.

They told me they'd bring you at dawn, if everything went well. They had a scheme to get you out of prison. Your heart had just about given out and your surface wounds were starting to get infected. I don't know how important you were to the organization; I don't know why this impressive deployment of lives to save yours. All I know is that to me, all human life deserves the highest respect. Even the lives of inhuman people, people who behave inhumanely, like your torturers, deserve respect. And your "compañeros" decided to risk their lives to save yours.

Your "compañeros" as you called them, and even I came to call them that: your "compañeros"—my only family, you told me one day. Yes, you would have liked to have children and go to dinner at your parents' house on Sundays. That's the fantasy of every woman of the revolution, you said. And sure, as an actress with an impressive career behind me, I knew these fantasies well. I made the decision a long time ago to be a single woman, and of course I fantasized about children coming home from school and Sunday empanadas. But no man I knew would have wanted to be Clara's partner. Clara, the one they stopped for autographs when she went shopping. Clara, who went out every afternoon to work and didn't come back until midnight. Clara, who really couldn't (didn't want to?) take on the responsibilities which are so traditionally feminine in a couple's relationship.

That August night I waited for you like a girl of fourteen awaiting her boyfriend to make love for the first time in her life. I didn't know if you'd hurt me, if I'd like you, or if I'd feel used and then discarded. I only knew that I'd agreed and that it was already too late to take it back. With the lights out, I ruined the manicure they'd given me that afternoon in the theatre and damned myself a thousand times for my obsession with risking everything for an act of love that would surely do me more harm than good.

It was a spooky arrival; I had to hold myself back to keep from shouting against the invasion. Barely visible in the darkness was a slight silhouette, wrapped in a too-big coat, feet dragging between Juanita and Miguel. The pale face almost glowed in the gloom of the hallway and the eyes, the eyes. What I wouldn't have given to be able to achieve that expression between fear and absolute fatigue.

And then the pain. In the light of the day, your wounds took on life and movement of their own. For the neighbours, the doctor became my lover and his daily visit was decorated with bouquets of roses and gladiolus. I got used to greeting him in the doorway with open arms. I knew that at eleven each morning, all of the curtains on the block would part halfway to enjoy the rendezvous. We made you comfortable in bed, I held your head and your hand, and he attacked the beaten skin.

Your eyes, your eyes looked at me with a dampness I hated, because what did I have to do with those eyes, with those sores, with the dry, clenched mouth? And your cries, what did I have to do with the stifled cries and those grotesque contortions? How I hated your pain!... and mine, pain for your wounds, our wounds, the wounds of two single women filled with desires, filled with dreams.

But love grew. At the beginning, you were my baby. I made you baby food and fed you, telling you about the theatre, I don't know, about the play, the critics, the other actors. One day you spoke to me, you asked me to tell you about the market, about the street. I told you that the market was filled with vegetables and fruit and that radishes are red and lettuce bright green, that plums are black, not black-black, but black-purple, like my favourite dress, faded now. I told you about the streets full of people, the cafés with their little sidewalk tables, now that spring is coming, traffic, horns, the crazy drivers. And you always wanted to know more and later on you asked for the newspaper and sat alone to read.

The morning bath became a ritual. First you protested—that you liked the water lukewarm, that you could soap yourself, that no thank you, and yes I can—but little by little you gave in and let me pass the sponge over your punished skin while we listened to Bach, our favourite. We turned it up good and loud so that we could talk normally without the neighbours hearing. And then the coffee and the croissants I got used to buying every morning for you, for us.

At night, after work, I found you sitting up erect in the armchair, waiting for me with the teapot ready. In the semi-darkness we drank tea, speaking in whispers about the things we never mentioned in the light of day. Driving through the empty streets, I hurried to arrive quickly at this dark, silent meeting, this game of playing at truth.

I found you sitting up in the chair, open, soft, vulnerable, giving off an inviting warmth. I went right to the core and opened up my own core. Your childhood, my childhood; your adolescence, your first love; my adolescence, my first love. Your sacrifice for the revolution, mine for the theatre. But more than anything, our commitment to life, and our very manner of being. And the severity with which we judged ourselves; this almost punishing effort to become more consequential in our thinking, in our actions. And loneliness—yours and mine.

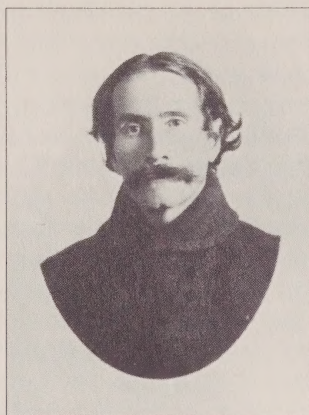
On those warm nights, I told you about my nightmares, only to find out that sinister images followed you, too. Those warm nights we spoke of our mothers, of the love and deep hatred for what they made us do, for what they wouldn't let us do, and for what they did to us. Those warm nights, I learned that for you, carrying a

gun was an achievement, a birth. Erect in the armchair, open in the armchair, our coming together was like walking into a mirror.

One day you told me that you were writing something important for me, that you'd finish it that day and show it to me when I came back from the theatre. It's something I've thought about a lot since I came back to life, you told me; it's something very profound that only you can understand. That night I hurried more than ever. When I opened the door, your faint perfume floated in the house, but the empty space in the armchair hit me hard. I looked for the note, I looked for your body, but there was nothing. You walked out on me without telling me, leaving an incredible chaos in my life.

I don't know where you went. I don't know if, in this very moment, your small hand grasps a weapon, a weapon I don't condone and against which I fight from my own front. All I know is that your perfume lingers and your image, inside my own. ❖

(Translated by Heidi Neufeld-Raine with the author)



THE VIA DOLOROSA OF VLADIMIR MEIER

Poetic adaptations by Tom McGauley of draft translations by Jack McIntosh, who gathered the material and translated the prose selections. The authors would like to thank the family of the late P.N. Maloff, the Doukhobor historian, who granted permission to quote from his work and to use Meier's photograph.

Vladimir Meier, poet and pilgrim, was many times throughout his life brought down into a suffering world of revolution and war. After his participation in the early Soviet revolutionary period, Meier sought some sort of temporary refuge in Canada, among another people of martyrdom, the Doukhobors.

Meier came into the midst of the ostensibly pacifist Doukhobors at the moment of their deepest turmoil. In October of 1924, their divine leader had died in what was taken by most to be an assassination. And the corporate body of the Doukhobors, the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood, was entering into the middle stages of a highly fractious bankruptcy. These were some among the myriad factors that led to the protracted struggle of the Doukhobors. This struggle found an external focus in a long confrontation with the Canadian government. One of the results of this spiritual combat was that hundreds of Freedomites were made inmates of the Canadian prison system.

Sentenced to six months' hard labour for his part in a demonstration in which he was attempting to mediate between the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors (who saw themselves as "liberators of all humanity... [and] every animal enslaved by man") and the provincial police, Meier was transported from Nelson to Oakalla Prison Farm. After a few months' confinement, he became unable to bear the very concrete oppression that had hardened around him. One day at Oakalla, a small bird flew into his cell. He saw in this event an omen of his own desire for the release of death.

Crawling out of his cell, scaling a guard tower, he shouted that he wished to be returned to Russia. To face a death at the hands of the Bolsheviks, he argued, was better than to die "from the smiling bullets of the English." A few days later, on the 2nd of January 1930, he died in the provincial psychiatric hospital.

MARTYRED IN PRISON FOR SYMPATHIZING WITH THE DOUKHOBORS: VLADIMIR MEIER

The North American press has repeatedly carried reports concerning persecution by the Canadian government of the 'Sons of Freedom' Doukhobors sect. These peaceable people, who have refused to pay taxes used by the state to maintain the army, police, and other pernicious state institutions, have been repeatedly beaten by the Canadian police and their property destroyed or confiscated.

Along with their wives and children, the Sons of Freedom were thrown into jail or interned in a concentration camp at Porto Rico, BC.

Among the victims of the arbitrary actions of the Canadian authorities are not only the Sons of Freedom, but as well, a resident of Canada no longer belonging to the sect but sympathetic to them, Vladimir Meier, a Catholic of German origin. He was thrown into prison solely because he protested against the cruel treatment of Doukhobor women and children by Canadian authorities. The conditions of his confinement in Oakalla Prison in Vancouver were so terrible, and the punishment imposed on the Doukhobors so disturbed Meier, that he could not stand the mockery and arbitrary behaviour of the authorities towards the people and himself, and went out of his mind. As an insane person, he was transferred to a psychiatric hospital, subjected to the final torment and died on January 2, 1930. The authorities did not announce his death on the pretext that the surname of the "insane man" was unknown. ✚

From *Probuzhdenie; ezhemesiachnyi organ svobodnoi mysli* (*The Awakening; Monthly Organ of Free Thought*) [Detroit émigré periodical] No. 12, 1930, 48.

THE CRANES

Flocked cranes swim single file
Some hide, my eyes chase others flying
yearning to overtake their height

Mustn't scare them, they're hiding
I can hear only a little clucking
One sighs so deeply—why?
They've flown off! Does it matter?

With bursting spring light I would
high, high fly there
and forgetting this our bitter life
I would sing the cranes' song

While below me the fields newly green
widely spread beyond.
See dawn-tinged storm clouds
rising over the horizon's edge

May spring warmth, life's joy
bud and grow in my heart
then may that precious first light
illuminate my winged path.

Vladimir Meier

Kurianitsy [Meier used this pseudonym in *Kursk*, his home province in Russia]
1909–1911 [age 17–19]

From *Moskva* [Chicago émigré periodical], Vol. 1, No. 10, December 1929, 8.

200 DOUKS ARRESTED AT NELSON SATURDAY

Riot Act Read by Magistrate—Leaders
of Russian Group Resisted But
Were Taken by Police

Nelson, Sept. 21.—Acting under instructions from the attorney-general's department following a report made yesterday by an official from Victoria as to sanitary condition of Doukobors' camp, just beyond the city limits, the provincial police shortly before noon notified the 200 or more encamped Sons of Freedom to move.

The final result was the arrest of the entire group by about thirty officers, including city police and specials, after the reading of the Riot Act by John Cartmel, government agent and provincial magistrate, had failed to secure their obedience.

LEADERS OFFERED RESISTANCE

A physical clash occurred when Maloff and the other leaders, whom the police first took in hand, resisted arrest and the officers were at first thrown back. The police, however, concentrated on these men, and the body of adherents on seeing them disappear into a big car, made no further resistance.

Under nominal guards, the Doukhobors, chanting as usual, were marched into the provincial jail. The Doukhobors, whose claim that they had no home was nullified yesterday by their being offered Porto Rico, one of the lumber camps of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood, are technically vagrants. They are also rioters, and have interfered with the police in the discharge of their duties.

While the inspector Forbes Cruikshank directed the operation, Mayor R. D. Barnes was present, the city authorities lending both moral and physical support. The first group arrested were booked as resisting arrest, and the balance on a charge of vagrancy. ✚

From the *Grand Forks Gazette*, Friday, September 27, 1929, 1.

VLADIMIR MEIER REMEMBERED BY A FRIEND (1948)

In the summer of 1924 a Russian named Vladimir Ivanovich Meier came to us from Germany on the recommendation of Nikolai Sheierman. A native of Kursk Province, Vladimir Ivanovich had been a student at Moscow University. His father, a native of Germany, had brought him up in that country. Vladimir was a splendid physical specimen. He told us he had even been a model for a Russian artist in Bulgaria. He was of temperamental disposition, with a poetic bent. He had fought in the civil war, which he always recalled with great aversion. At first he had been on the side of the Reds, and later went over to the Whites and joined Denikin's army.

He had eventually suffered greatly in his strivings. He was almost always in an alarmed mental state. Sometimes he would scold the Doukhobors for destroying Russia. "Everything there is rotten," he would say, "the Jews have broken our great, beautiful Russia for all time." At other times he would begin to hurl abuse at the Whites, himself included, for running away. "We should have stayed there and gone through all trials, grief, and even death itself. We, the best of her children, are to blame for leaving our Mother," he would say.

He was captivated by the Doukhobors, but also not for long. When he saw a little weakening or deviation, he would become terribly disillusioned: "What sort of idea can this be which cannot keep a person on his own two feet?" Often he would write me letters full of reproach for Doukhorbor shortcomings, saying that Doukhorborism had not yet grown up, was limping on both legs and that it needed to be cured. Often he would invite me to travel with him to visit the Theosophical Brotherhood of Peter Denav in Bulgaria. "There I saw more consistent and more developed people, spiritually. But what have we here? Today we see a Doukhorbor, ready to die for his ideas, and tomorrow he is sitting in a bar."

Our friendship with him at times flowed close, but at other times would go asunder. Several years went by this way. Once when we were not on close terms, he had an encounter with Pavusha Skrypnyk. Apparently Skrypnyk had a healthy influence on Meier. On one occasion they happened almost simultaneously to come to our place to spend the night. They quickly sized each other up and soon got into a heated argument about the Soviet Union. I upheld the middle-of-the-road opinion that for the time being, one cannot say anything definite about the Russian experience of communism, and that only time will tell. Vladimir Ivanovich again maintained the old line that under the Bolshevik regime, Russia had perished forever. For a time Skrypnyk was silent. He listened patiently and seemingly absent-mindedly. Vladimir Ivanovich spoke with great vehemence. I, on the other hand, tried as little as possible to be involved in the discussion. It was much more interesting for me to observe these two opposite types. I awaited Skrypnyk's objections, for I knew that he was capable of coming out with unexpected opinions, powerful as a great ocean wave.

"You're getting worked up over nothing, Volodya," began Skrypnyk, "and there's no point in hurling abuse or taking leave of your senses. I'm not a Doukhorbor by birth, you know, but in the spirit—yes, I am. I am from Kiev Province. I myself don't know how I held back. But my consciousness now is purely Doukhorbor, and I tell you openly, in the Freedomite way, that I recognize

no governments of any kind. If a dog were to devour all governments in the world, it would be no loss, but in fact a gain. Now look here, Volodya, you have been cursing all the Bolsheviks, and you want the Whites again, and no doubt you want the Tsar back and all the ministers with him all the way to the gendarmes. Yes, Volodya, it is no small thing that you are hatching. This is all I have to say to you on that score. Perhaps that little song is finished. How could a Russian, after such terrible upheavals, return again to the old? Of course, in my opinion the Russian people need neither tsars or Bolsheviks. What they do need, however—we all do—is pure, genuine, Divine truth. About the Bolsheviks, this is what I say: all of us Russians—you, I, and the others—nurtured them together. Now, however you may condemn them, they are what we have sown. And what we have sown, we shall reap. Life is an eternally flowing broad river, impossible to dam up or enclose, even less so for oneself, as people are trying to do not only in Russia, but throughout the wide world. For what reason did this arise, and where did it come from, this idea that we need various princes, nobles, administrators, Napoleons, judges, and generals, yes, and also sundry church rulers in vestments carrying crosses? I tell you, this is all a fabrication of the human mind, or rather the fabrication of a few cunning scoundrels. Lo and behold, they enclosed the living river to the point that the dam would not hold, as was the case in Russia, and the little river overflowed, and Mother Russia was inundated, not just with water, but also with blood. I know, Volodya, many innocent victims fell there, but what can we do? I was in Kiev during the disturbances in Russia in 1905–1906, and that experience I can say is what caused me to flee here to the Doukhobors. I also knew of the uprising of the Potemkin crew and much else besides. Yes, the revolutionaries were cruel, I do not condone their actions. But those whom you are praising, did they behave well? Why even talk about it! How can you close your eyes to the untruth upon which power was based there, both political and ecclesiastical? All of us know what went on in our Russia, what persecutions there were against peaceful, righteous people. They were thrown in jail, exiled, and chased all over cold Siberia. Millions were destitute and hungry, while there was a handful of rich people. If all that was the case, it means that Christ's truth was not present. That is what gave birth to the Bolsheviks."

At this point Volodya got very upset and began to challenge Skrypnyk:

"You were not there and do not know the Bolsheviks. They built even more prisons than there were before the Tsars."

"Well, they too will fall. But if you unwind that little wound-up ball of string which the Bolsheviks came out of, the end goes deep into Russian history. That is why I am telling you that we are all equally guilty, and I am no exception. Revolution is an operation on our whole organism, and no organism is an easy matter. Moreover, if all the great Russian minds had not wanted this operation, they should have heeded the sound advice of the voice which sonorously echoed throughout the whole of Russia with the clanking of shackles in the Siberian taiga. These messengers called the Russian people to a peaceful, bloodless restoration of health. The Doukhobors and other sectarians graphically presented their programme to the Russian people when they burned their weapons. And what magnificent exploits Leo Tolstoy presented to Russia! But what came of it! Was it not he who

wrote to the Russian government and clergy:

For what reason are you hanging people? Stop it, you fools, or if not, put the noose around my neck, too. This way I cannot and do not wish to live.

"Was it not he who, together with the Doukhobors and others of like mind, raised up rescue beacons amidst this world's darkness of false living, militarism, depravity and every other untruth? But no, the people would not heed this life-giving appeal and so destruction came. And you have not yet seen anything yet. The night of horror will hover over the whole world and consummate its judgement, because we have not yet repented our sins," Skrypnyk concluded triumphantly.

His words struck like the blows of a hammer on an anvil. I saw how these words penetrated deeply into Volodya's soul. A change came over his face. After a long pause, Volodya said:

"If it had been a Doukhobor who had said these words, I would not have believed him, but I believe Skrypnyk. For me a new era has opened. I understand that life must not be divided into compartments, it is indivisible. Life should be full and equal for all. Life has to be created. We all must be only creators, creating light and pure joy."

Shortly thereafter, Volodya brought me his poem "USSR," evidently inspired by Skrypnyk's words.

After reading it to me, Volodya said:

"Pete, these are my new thoughts. It is Skrypnyk who has inspired them in me and to an extent determined my fate. I shall probably go with you to the end."

Volodya kept his word and remained with us. His destiny concluded tragically. He died for the ideal of Doukhoborism, about which I shall write in greater detail in another place.

Peter Maloff
Canada

From Maloff's *Dukhobortsy, ikh istoriia, zhizn' i bor'ba* (*The Doukhobors: Their History, Life and Struggle*). Thrums, BC, 1948, 412–15.

RUSS [USSR]

For my Dad, killed in November 1919

Family graves
fields broad as seas
sacred wellsprings
fires of November

Russia, you are more beautiful
than midnight lands
Your knight is immortal
the bayan* your prophet

Dear birch in the field
and cornflower's dark blue
wormwood by the trails
into barrows of hills

Why such fragrance in every flower?
Because blossoming there far away
They have been nourished with blood

Tired heart go on back
With sweet water and bread
Christ will rejoice over you.

Forgive and be forgiven
catch and be caught
love and they will love
and return happiness to you.

* bayan: a large accordion

Vladimir Meier
Canada
1927

From *Moskva*, No. 2, April 1929, 5.

A LETTER TO MALOFF

Nelson, BC

June 11, 1926

Dear Pete,

I am writing on a half sheet in order to cut down on the weight and volume of this letter. Enclosed is a translation of Littauer's article. Do what you like with it. It is a wonderful little piece, but I left out a little and added a little for the common good. Thank you for your affectionate letter and Andreichin's magazine from Bulgaria. How could one forget Sofia, Bulgaria? My closest friend, Vanya (Ivan) Atanasov, lives there. That is one person you would have to meet, Pete, to understand what a rare soul he is. And I have others there, friends and otherwise. Also in Paris somewhere Seryozha (Sergey) Minaev is wandering about—he's also a real spark. How great it would be to gather all of my kindred spirits, if only for a week. That is where we would have a good conversation about the real meaning of life. But you know, Pete, I've almost solved these problems: in my opinion, the meaning of life is to make the unhappy happy.

You say that I have done a lot for you, but I grieve that I am not in a position to do something good for my friends and spiritual brethren. Maybe in time I shall be able to help with something when I get my strength back. But right now I am almost exhausted after two years living among Canadians.

Still Pete, I have an idea—not philosophical, not naturalistic, not Tolstoyan, and not Doukhobor, though in parts the first and the second and third and fourth are good in themselves. I am devoted to the most high, the most beautiful, the most dear. He has armed me with both hatred and love. I hate everything that is against the gentle, dear, and just person who is striving towards truth. I shall lay down my life for the beautiful. I shall struggle against that which is mean, egotistically ugly, or base, with all my strength and with every means at my command, and will stop at nothing to make sure that that which should perish will perish, and soon. But for that which is bright and shining, I shall give everything. Yet it would, I feel, be more pleasant for me to possess pure contemplation, devotion, and joy—positive love, that is. For there are two kinds of love—the positive, that is constructive love, and the negative or destructive. But notice this, there is no egotism in either. Egotism is that against which negative love—"the Love that burns and destroys"—contends. "Egotism" is negative inertia. Love is movement. Positive love is harmony. Those are the three states of being.

Look at the sun. It burns evil and fondles, caresses, and quickens that which is good. That is how I want to be. It will suffice if, though weak, I become a tiny likeness of my dear sun.

But enough of that. Tomorrow I want to settle my accounts and on Monday or Tuesday come to see you in Thrums to say farewell and leave some papers. If you go to California, Pete, it will be dreary for me.

Sincere greetings to your family.

Ever loving you,
Volodya Meier

From Maloff, op. cit., 528-9

RUSS [USSR] II

To my favorite poet, Aleksey Tolstoy:
"To everyone, everyone, everyone. . ."—Aelita

Can Russia be broken apart
are window and doors behind barbed wire?
No, the road to her has not been cut.
We need to love her now
 She is Russia, Rus'—alive—
 ever and always alone
 around barrows of fresh green,
 where by-gone's rattle of spinning-wheel
 steadily hums through the years

Leafed oak groves rustle
and smells of grasses come in rivulets
grey wolf's mythic howling
jasmine's colour sad to the tender heart
 Don't forget the meadows
 And teetering churchyard crosses
 And these geese honking through spring nights
 Did you know Russia in its simplicity?
 Be healed with the country babkas.

And then go lie down
in rye's full blooming sea
And understand that all the old sayings live
Their all is not yet fully disclosed
 As you pass through droves and flocks
 barefoot on fresh grass, love them
 Divine your fortune in any beetle
 and never kill anybody

In evening's deepest dusk
you'd understand even Red Moscow
as her sons caught up in hurricanes
spread dawn's tidings
 So that the whole world would
 "live and have mercy"
 My Land gave itself
 and more beautiful yet
 it arose from the grave
 And went home,
 into the fields.

Vladimir Meier

Published posthumously in *Moskva*, Vol. II, No 3(13), 1930, 5.

RUSS [USSR]

For Nadya Ivanitskaya

Desired land, Rus' forever stands
mysterious, mute and beautiful
to the impure a fire-spouting dragon
to the holy Skete,* lilac in springtime.

The Serpent guards long unreckoned treasure
Love and Spirit's loyal paladin
but behind them is the Skete
font of earthly brotherhood
and happiness serene,
of raspberry bush and aspen.

*Skete: a kind of Russian Orthodox monastery

From *Moskva*, Vol. II, No 3(13), March 1930, 14.

AT NEW YEAR'S

To everyone eternal joy and happiness
Almighty God grant you
worthy and noble thought
so that none of us would know
the turmoil of the troubled soul
May the Russian smile again shine
from behind the darkness

Let us take up the cross of wandering
My heart's fervent hope is to help
my brothers escape enfeebling ignorance
May this solidarity not be in vain
that our inner truth
become word, deed, and desire.

For a crucified people
for its lofty dream
should we begrudge their dreams and solitary torpor?
What happiness and what forgetfulness
for us when in far-off fields
the long moans are worth our anguish? ♦

Vladimir Meier
"Kuranik"
(1930)

From *Moskva*, Vol. II, No 4, June 1929, 8.



FROM THE TRAILS OF BILLY MINER

1.

He traces the curves of her
with the hands of his imagination.
She is smooth and cool and as wonderful
as anything he has ever desired.
But the arms of his sleep are comfortless.
He has watched her pass herself from man to man
—exciting their rough passions
as if she were a dancer—to be held, briefly
before slipping away once again.
Farms, ranches, towns have emptied for her.
Men have lived and died for her.
In darkness she is light
sending forth rays of hope—or despair
for those she denies her favours.
Now, his awakening day explodes with her
and she consumes him,
is his every waking thought these days.

The heavy beast makes its unscheduled stop,
throwing up fiery sparks
with each hiss and puff of its mighty breath.
No front-yard decoration this
but a hundred tons of hissing steel
coming to a slow rest beyond the front yard
where the kids spend their days, playing.
They listen for the distant rumble
of the dragon's heavy tread.

At the window the kids watch.
The mists part and the armoured body is revealed.
They pierce it with the lances and swords
of their tender imaginations.

Outside, shots puncture the night.
Excited yells and screams.
The children protest to no avail
as mom damps the lights.
She drags them deeper into the house
where inner walls will protect them.

On the tracks, the heavy beast sighs.
Dark knights penetrate its body armour.

It's just one of those days.
 When you're on the run things catch up
 to make you suddenly realize
 outlawing too has its bad days.

The wrong train halted at night.
 The wrong car and safe blown.
 None of the boys happy at the split
 of fifteen dollars
 and a bottle of liver pills.

Later, the too-close posse ruins sleep
 —spooks the hobbled horses off, who knows where?
 And so the endless miles of walking
 in shoes that hurt the feet,
 leaving tracks the pack can follow
 in spite of all the tricks.
 It's just one of those days.
 When you're on the run things catch up
 —like the law in their yellow slickers
 on their horses pointing guns
 and the prospecting story working (maybe)
 until Shorty blows the play by screaming
 "Look out boys! It's all up!"

No talking.

Silence is the system inside the BC Pen.

there are only the guarded whispers of men
around the iron bars to break the quiet.

Miner on his bed on high five stares out
through the barred window. He looks over the wall,
watching paddlewheelers and steamers
laden with the goods of commerce and trade
engage in common traffic

on a river that is blacker than the night.

Among the cellblock noises, he hears the steady tide
pushing against the keel of a small boat
he sets adrift within his mind.

Miner once again rides the night.
The hoofs of his horse pound their song
along the trails of the mind.
He leaps—a spark,
crossing into thought as he travels
across the paper plains. ♦

NUCLEAR WINTER

Oakley sees the mirror-image of herself and is pleased: tight black pants, chain-link belts slung belligerently across her hips, oversized white shirt, large dangling silver earrings, greased-up hair standing shell-shocked from her scalp.

The reflection grins wickedly at Oakley, and Oakley grins wickedly back. She feels in control.

"Name," the prison clerk asks curtly, dwarfed behind an oversized typewriter, fingers poised expectantly on the home row keys.

Oakley does not hear him. The tiny man repeats the question authoritatively, as if he is the warden, and she is an inmate.

"Name?" Oakley parrots, slightly bewildered, not yet free of the reflection in the window.

"What is it? Jane? Anne? Mary?" the clerk says, an exasperated edge to the tone.

"Oakley."

The voice sounds unfamiliar to her, detached, as if it is recorded on tape, and being played back.

"Spelling?"

The clerk does not conceal his impatience. The kid would have a strange name, he thinks, his body twitching, fingers ghost dancing across the keyboard with pent-up energy.

"Oakley, like Annie. You know, the Wild, Wild, West, and all that?"

There is the click of the keys, followed by the exaggerated slap of the space bar.

"Surname?"

"Emerson."

"Who are you visiting?"

"My brother."

"Name?"

"Oakley Emerson."

"I already know your name," the tiny man elaborates, leaning over the large typewriter. "What is your brother's name?"

Oakley feels naïve, young. She wants to feel confident, mature. To match the image in the window, as if the prison and its keepers do not affect her.

"I misunderstood," she begins to explain, "Tom."

"Surname?"

"Same as mine."

It sounds flippant. She hadn't meant to sound flippant, just self-assured.

"Surname?"

"Emerson."

"Prisoner's number?"

"I forget."

Oakley is lying. She knows the number, but numbers are for buildings and telephones, not for people, not for Tom.

"Have a seat."

Oakley sits on a grey steel fold-up chair under the seascape watercolour. A woman approaches her: flat grey hush puppies, taupe nylon legs, grey flannel skirt with hemline five centimetres past the knee to prevent arousal, dartless blue cotton shirt to hide the shape of the breasts.

"Are you harbouring any drugs?"

"No."

"Concealed weapons?"

"No."

"Contraband of any sort?"

"No."

"Passing anything to an inmate is a federal offence and leaves you open to prosecution."

Oakley is silent. She does not realize she is expected to reply.

"Understood?"

"Yes, Ma'am."

The words are immediate, vocalized before the thought. Oakley is furious with herself: "ma'am."

"It is within my right to search you."

Oakley panics. She won't stand naked, bent over, legs spread apart, degradingly invaded like the prisoner in the movie at the drive-in. But that prisoner escaped—dynamited the jailhouse into fragments, guards and all. She has come to tell Tom about it.

"First door to the right," the lady says in sudden dismissal, turning her back and walking away.

Oakley enters a large room. Armchairs crowd around coffee tables. The clusters of furniture attempt to display a coziness. The effect does not quite succeed, but the illusion is calming.

Oakley is early; there are no other visitors. Soon, the room will throb. Children will shyly squirm on strange laps. Men and women will trade intimacies normally reserved for bedrooms. Grey-haired mothers will refuse to cry, armed with photograph albums and funny anecdotes about home.

The guard in the adjoining anteroom pretends to read the *Weekend Observer*, faking immense pleasure at the local baseball scores. In reality, he hawkishly watches for impending drug deals, escapes, fistfights, anything illegal or undesirable. His charade is crafted from experience. He knows that prisoners are like schoolboys. The forbidden occurs when the teacher is preoccupied.

Oakley chooses the furniture arrangement in the far corner. She deliberately folds her hands, shifting position, rubbing her palms dry against the thighs of her pants. She hears the clock on the wall painstakingly count. She sees a mother wearily shepherd two scrubbed boys into the centre of the room.

Tom arrives.

He leans against the wall, as if his hands hold up the building. He spreads his feet apart, and allows a guard to pat his underarms, waist, and hips, to run fingers deftly up and down his legs. Tom is a small man, almost a boy. His features are fine, even bird-like. There is a suggestion of vulnerability about Tom, an undesirable trait in a prison. In public, he counters it with a scowl and a practised shrug. Alone in his cell,

he does sit-ups and push-ups. Sometimes, in the gym, he lifts weights. The new muscles shyly bulge from his somewhat surprised body. Such attention is novel.

Tom looks in anticipation towards the door.

"They didn't come," Oakley tells him.

He sits down across from her and slouches casually.

"Mom's sick."

Tom panics. Oakley sees fear tidal-wave across his face. Her brother imagines that their mother is dying. He can't go to her bedside, because he is in prison. It is too late to tell her that he loves her, that he is sorry.

"Oh, she's not THAT sick," Oakley reassures him, reading his face, suppressing her own guilt. "A headache, the 'flu or somethin'. They'll visit next Sunday, for sure."

Tom digests the information, fear receding. "Then how'd you get here?"

"By bus."

"They let you come by yourself?" he asks, with obvious surprise.

"They don't know. Think I'm at Jill's cottage for the day. Don't expect me home till after dinner, about the same time the bus arrives in town."

"They'll find out. You'll catch shit for sure."

Tom is laughing. He uses his whole body in the same manner a fat man is expected to laugh. But there is no fat to jiggle, only skeleton and skin, and a bit of muscle. Oakley is pleased with herself; she likes to make Tom feel happy. She feels invincible. Nothing can hurt her. Nothing can hurt him. She won't allow it.

Another prisoner spreads his legs and lifts his elbows. The guard searches him. The action annoys Oakley. "Hey, Tom," she says, her voice loud, mocking. "That idiot enjoys running his hands up and down other guys' legs? What is he? Some kind of pervert?"

"Shut up!" Tom hisses, as if he wants to hit her.

Instead, he hits the flat of his hand against the coffee table. "Je-suss, Oakley. Whatcha trying to do? Make my life unbearable?"

"Tom—"

"Shee-it."

"I didn't mean it—"

"Goddammit!"

"I'm sorry, Tom—"

"I know, I know. It's just that—"

"You don't have to explain."

"—if he tells me to do something—"

"Tom, it's OK—"

"—anything at all—"

"Tom—"

"—I do it."

"C'mon—"

"Look, Oakley. If he decides to piss in my cell and tells me to clean it up, I clean it up. It's that simple. I have no say in the matter, no goddamn say."

Tom is spent. He seems diminished, almost breakable. The delicate qualities of his face are highlighted: the narrowness of his nose, the fine line of his chin, the hollow beneath the peak of his cheekbones. Oakley remembers the day she first noticed the fragility of Tom. She was a child.

The sun had given no warning of the storm. Oakley had darted into the house, and into the soothing safety of her mother's arms. Tom had found shelter under the umbrella branches of a fir tree, crouching low, burrowing into the gummy trunk like a cornered animal. The destruction lasted thirty seconds. The tornado winds and pelting rain simply stopped, the sun regaining control, as if it had never forfeited it. The calm was eerie, almost a mockery, a blessing that could not be trusted. Tom slowly emerged from his shelter, unsure if he was hurt, looking at the quiet blue sky warily, as if it may spit a nuclear bomb. Sound returned: he identified the impatient squawking of young birds, and dug through the chaos until he retrieved a nest. The mother was dead. Tom wrapped the nest in his t-shirt and carried it home, as if it were precious, the last living remnant of sanity. He nursed the five half-dead babies with egg and water squeezed from an eyedropper. That night, Oakley crept out of her bed and hid behind a door, watching Tom. Bit by bit, the birds died. Bit by bit, Oakley became aware of the perishably fine features that made up her brother.

"Hey, Tom," Oakley changes the topic, voice gay, forced. "Remember when we were kids? Annie Oakley and Billy the Kid—"

"Yeah, I remember. We'd play cowboys and Indians all day, and you'd never play dead—" Tom laughed, for the moment away from the prison, back in the past, a little boy playing with his baby sister.

"Whatchamean—"

"You never played dead, Oakley. I'd shoot you, right in the middle of the forehead, point-blank, and you'd squeal 'missed, missed,' in that spoiled brat voice."

"Maybe once or tw—"

"ALL the time. You ALWAYS manipulated the game to suit yourself. And if I didn't play it your way, you'd run to Mom spilling a bucket of tears. God, I thought you'd be a movie director, or a bossy schoolteacher, or a traffic cop someday." Tom teased.

"I was five years old at the time we played cowboys and Indians. You were seven, practically an adult in my eyes. Could'a let me win once in a while—" Oakley protested.

"Me, LOSE?"

Tom winces at the irony, as if in pain. He remembers he is in prison.

Oakley does not want the mood to change. She searches for conversation, something lighthearted.

"You stuck me with that dumb nickname."

Tom laughs, rescued for the moment from reality.

"You made me call you Annie Oakley. Wouldn't respond to anything else. Wore a fake rawhide skirt, and a cowboy hat with a plastic whistle at the end of the string."

A prisoner claims an empty chair from Tom and Oakley, pushing it across the floor as if it were a car out of gas. The room is full, and now empty chairs are a valuable commodity.

"I didn't mean it to happen, Oakley."

"Tom, do you remember when we were kids—"

"You know that, don't you Oakley?"

"Yeah—"

"I couldn't hurt someone, not intentionally."

"I know, Tom."

"We were protesting death—not promoting it," Tom delivered his words with the slick passion of an orator.

"Let's talk about something different, an idea I have been mulling over—"

But Tom did not want to talk about something else.

"Think of it, Oakley. A nuclear missile could be whistling its irreversible way over the Bering Strait right now."

"Tom, I saw this movie at the drive-in."

"Maybe there will be nuclear war because of a computer error. Maybe a high-level security guard has a tumour pressing against his brain, and it makes him go crazy, and he decides to end the world. Maybe he caught his wife fucking the mailman. Maybe the President felt the need for a first strike, and the Russians are retaliating."

Tom is excited. The muscles of his face pull tautly across the bone. His right hand jabs at the air, beating to a pulp the urgency of the message. He half-stands, clearing his body of the constraints of the chair. "Don't be too smug, Oakley, if the missile lands off-target, you can't escape the Nuclear Winter: smoke and radiation layering the sky, blocking out the rays of the sun. You think I'M in a prison! You'd freeze to death, or starve. How long do you think those cans of beans mom hoards in the pantry would last? Can't farm. The soil is contaminated. Can't drink. The water is contaminated too."

Oakley decides to end the tirade. "It's hot in here," she complains, wiping her forehead with the back of her hand. "Wanna Coke?"

"Yeah, Oakley. Sure. Just what I need."

Tom sinks into the chair. The speech has made his throat dry. His body is damp with the sweat of exertion and he feels drained. The cushion seems to swallow him.

The guard in the anteroom watches Tom from behind the newspaper. He notes the angry slap against the coffee-table, the animated body movements, the feverish intensity in the face. He prepares to intercede, but the girl with the bizarre hairstyle stands up, and the prisoner sits down, apparently calmed. The guard decides to monitor the situation, reading Ann Landers, chuckling about the letter from the man who wants a sex change so he can bear the offspring of his male lover.

Against the wall is a line of vending machines. Coffee, hot chocolate, tea, chicken soup in one; coke, sprite, ginger-ale, orange Fanta in another. Oakley slips the money into the appropriate slot and pushes the selection button. She watches a cup drop, followed by a stream of water, a stream of cola. She opens the plastic door, pulls out the drink, reaches into the change slot, pockets the change and delivers the cola to Tom. She returns to the machine for a ginger-ale and sips it carefully as she walks to her chair.

They sit in silence. Oakley shrewdly waits for Tom to recover. The caffeine in the cola quickly revives him; energy returns to his body. His conscious mind leaves the site of the nuclear explosion and explores other brain cells. He thinks about the upcoming baseball game between the inmates and the Kingston Men's All-Star Team.

"I saw this movie about a prisoner," Oakley says, broaching the subject of her visit."

"Yeah?" Tom responds politely.

"The hero is an explosion expert, learned his trade in Vietnam. So he built a makeshift bomb from odds and ends in the prison workshop. BAM! He blew the prison to bits, and escaped through the rubble."

"Good for him," Tom comments, preoccupied.

"Tom, listen to me, please—"

Oakley pauses. Her voice is soft, but demanding. The intensity grabs Tom. He hands Oakley his full attention. She capitalizes on the moment, tossing aside argument and reason.

"Tom, why don't you escape?"

Oakley had planned to make a statement, not ask a question. The words sounded feeble, almost silly. She injects force into her voice, confidence into the construction of her sentences. "Escape, Tom. Make your way North! They'll never find you in the bush!"

Tom is smiling, as if at a child.

Oakley feels like a cheerleader. There is too much exclamation in her voice. Rah! Rah! Tom! YOU CAN DO IT! She controls the volume, turns down the emotion. "Use the survival techniques you mastered in case of a nuclear attack," she presses. "I'll get food, and dye to change your haircolour, and a knife to hunt, and whatever else you need. After a while, you can find work in the mines or with the road crew. Earn some money and leave the country."

Her body acts without permission. It shakes, betraying her, displaying emotion. Tom is not responding as she had anticipated. She hears herself panic. Her voice rises beyond control, then breaks, crumbling to a whimper. "You're not a criminal. You don't deserve to rot in a cell. It's not fair."

"What do you propose to do, Oakley, bomb the place?"

Oakley says nothing. She does not have to answer the question with words. Tom recognizes confirmation in the silence. Bomb the place: it is exactly what she intends.

"Every night in my cell, Oakley, I dream about the simple things I used to do: cut the grass, walk to the corner store for potato chips, dive into the cool waters of the cottage, stroll with a pretty girl on a moonlit night, kiss her gently on the cheek—"

Tom speaks softly, as if to verbalize his dreams might maim them. Suddenly, his voice hardens and he aims his words at Oakley with the same angry force of a gun shoved at the temple of her head.

"That guy with his legs blown off—do you suppose he dreams from his wheelchair?"

"It was an accident, Tom. You didn't plan it that way. How could you predict the technicians at the nuclear plant would order a pizza?"

"That's just the point. I couldn't predict it, but it happened, anyway. We scripted every goddamn detail. We didn't want to hurt anyone, just draw attention to the cause. But it didn't proceed the way we had PLANNED. Nothing ever does, Oakley—"

Their target had been a nuclear research station nestled in the Northern Ontario wilderness. They had planned to detonate the "firecracker," as they called the small homemade bomb, in the early evening when the majority of researchers were off-duty, and the nuclear reactors were nursed by a skeleton staff of technicians.

"Suppose we go ahead with your plan, Oakley. Suppose someone dies, maybe a

guard, maybe an inmate, maybe me, maybe you. Is that death any less evil than the deaths at Hiroshima, or Nagasaki? Is it, Oakley? Is it?"

Tom had scaled the fence undetected, planting the explosive twenty-five metres beyond the security guard, in a move designed to embarrass government officials by demonstrating the penetrability of the station. The group at the fringe of the woods, lying flat, peering out beneath bushes with the giggly anticipation of schoolchildren waiting for a firecracker in a bottle to explode. But they had not anticipated the pizza. The delivery car stopped at the security gate, and the driver proceeded past the guard on foot. He walked quickly, with a light bounce to his step, balancing the pie on his flattened palm. Tom jumped up and screamed. The man looked curiously in his direction, and stepped full-force on the bomb.

"Every day I think of escape, Oakley. It wouldn't be that hard. Some parts of the day are busy, and things are confused. Maybe I could steal a guard uniform and walk right out the front door. Maybe I could build a small bomb from the odds and ends in the workshop, just like the hero of your movie. Maybe I could plan the explosion as a diversion, not to hurt anyone, just to make my getaway. But what happens if I KILL this time, Oakley?"

Tom had held the unconscious man in his arms, soothing him, brushing the sweat from his forehead, pleading with him not to die. The blood had reddened Tom's shirt, his pants, his underwear. The ambulance attendant had assumed Tom was hurt in the blast, insisted upon checking him for lacerations, taking his pulse, monitoring his breathing. It wasn't until Tom hysterically screamed that he had set the bomb, that he was responsible for this God-fucking mess that the policeman had arrested him.

"Living with the memory of that night is kinda like Nuclear Winter, Oakley. There is no rewinding the clock to a better time. I can't ever give that man back his legs. But I don't stay here, in prison, as self-punishment or to repay a debt to society. I stay in this goddamn rathole because I can't risk what may happen if I try to leave."

Tom is calm, the result of the finality of his decision. He stretches across the table to touch Oakley. She does not withdraw. The guard in the anteroom turns his attention to other prisoners. The trouble is defused.

Oakley wants the comfort of the familiar. She craves the city as the day surrenders to night: to tap the rise of excitement, the pulse of the street; to cluster in small groups, joining larger groups; to converge at The Club, dancing madly; to collapse, dead tired, no more to give. ♦

TWO CANINES

1.

Ballad of the Dog, man's lasting friend
according to tradition

I've fought like a dog
I could have finished like a dog—
I've won like a dog;
I've lied like a dog
I've even rejoiced like a dog
when ordered:
"Scram!"

Now I clasp to my chest
bits of an old gramophone record
that speaks to me
with consecrated voice:

"Trust us
His Master's Voice is a lifetime
bargain
It will offer you
 the lasting friendship of a dog;
 rejoice, you've won!"

I rejoice and I don't have the nerve
to ask:
"What did I do to deserve this victory?"

I press the broken record to my chest
trying to guess
whose voice will I hear in the night
yelling "Scram!"

2.
BADLY NEEDED

Nothing here—
only the tree under your window
swaying
offering its leaves
like a miraculous Lottery
of people.
All we need
is a dog—
this venerable soul
has been prowling around
for some time
the fogged window
cannot prevent me from seeing it
this is, gentlemen
true to my promise
a t r a n s p a r e n t window
yes, we can see through it
the soul of a dog
so badly needed
that my pen trembles in my hand
and I hear his Woff! Woff!
even without gluing my ear
to the paper—
the window is so
t r a n s p a r e n t, gentlemen
that I get a glimpse
of my father's face
he could have died in a lead mine
or in a Romanian Gulag
and not in a hovel
stinking of gas
at the height of the oil crisis
not in a decrepit shack
wallpapered with shadows
of thirty-five generations of students
taught in Romanian by my father
that a tree is a tree
and a dog is a dog
each dying a proper death
according to its own law,
and that Woff! Woff! is not
a secret code
but it may stand
for the soul of a dog

so badly needed today
to set in motion the warm
unspoken
 “Scram!”

3.
THE DEATH WALL
to Richard Lang

Why die a desperate death
when you'll be reborn free?
Yet nothing can stop you now
though you've heard
that the Death Wall motorcyclist
has retired to work
as a salesman in a state store.
Not even the reliable news
about yesterday's adolescents
masturbating furiously
to such slogans as "Hands off
the Republic of..." "Socialism is
Bastion of Peace!"
means much to you.
Nothing can stop you now
even though you've seen
the goggling eyes of other adolescents
watching in public squares
the performed Life of
Saint Catherine of Siena
though you heard them groan
you still could not tell
the masturbators from the slogans
screamed in loudspeakers.

4.
THEY SAID

I believed in
everlasting youth—
“You’ve wasted yours,” they said.

I believed—
“What if you believed?”
they quipped
stealing the words right out of my mouth.

I loved
I hated
I even wished—
“What if you did?”
Oh, that brothel voice
passing itself for an oracle!

5.
PAX ROMANA

To keep me tongue-tied
you've sent me a wagon
of chewing gum.
To knock the last breath out of me
you've shown me pictures
from the Gulag country.
To punish me for seeing
you've blindfolded me
with thirty-three miles of typing ribbon.
To keep me from writing
you recall your gifts to me.
But what would you do
if I chose to cheer you?
To keep my mouth clammed
send me another cart-load
of chewing gum.
I'll spare you my applauses
free of charge. ❖

Translated by Marcel Cornis-Pop

THE PEAK INTERVIEW AT MATSQUI INSTITUTION

TOM: There is a difference between the way the people who come here instruct courses and the way they instruct them on the hill. They find us a lot more challenging because we don't give them any ground. They have to back up what they're saying.

MICHEL: It's also because here we're over eighteen years old. We have a life experience that other students don't really have. Right from the beginning we have a critical stance.

TOM: When they teach here they're earning their dollars. I was up there for some upper-level English courses a few years back. The difference in student participation on campus is that everybody was really passive in class; all they wanted to do was take notes from what the instructors were saying. Here it's not like that. If they are delivering something in a lecture, they have to justify and defend it. If they are giving their personal opinion, then they really come under attack. Because we have smaller classes its more like a workshop than a lecture. When you are actually challenging your instructor you're going to get more out of it. You're not just going to get the textbook propaganda.

STEVE: Plus we have to live with the stuff. It affects us directly everyday. We learn what goes and what doesn't go just from living it. It's not a textbook knowledge.

TOM: Another point too, is that we have a lot of fun in our classes because of the challenges. When you're up on the hill and doing your degree, everything is so serious. Everybody is trying to be a university student. Well we don't have that seriousness here. Our marks in comparison are just as good, if not higher. We have fun.

MICHEL: None of us are career-minded in taking the courses. I keep hearing from a lot of professors and others that the amount of personal work that a prisoner will do is greater. Most of us are going to go beyond the textbook. Makes it harder here because we don't have the library. We take it more seriously on one level. We are not going to sit idle and take what the guy tells us without questioning it.

NEIL: It's on a personal level, the work we do. If we're writing something we are not just going to stick to the tried and true. We are going to take it on a personal level and go off somewhere else with it. We put our own personality into it.

ERLE: It's funny, when I was thinking about what to write for *The Peak*, I thought about writing about the shortcomings of the educational system and the consequences it will have on society in general. Everybody is buying into the status quo

and believing what they are told. "This is the way it is." It is very difficult being a prisoner and continually reading about how the world is when you look around and see it's not like that. That is one of the greatest problems in solving problems in that problems aren't even recognized. They are not even described. It's the acceptance on the students' part to just take all this in, even though I'm sure they're not so stupid and even though I'm sure they realize that these are just the whitewashed versions, they accept it because it's the easiest route to take, rather than challenging it like we do here. Take the example of ethics and research. Prisoners are forced into testing and those things have a very negative effect for the people who are participants. There are three or four major ethics which are breached. We all read their glorious ideals of the great liberal democracy of justice and due process but that's not how it works. I try to not be too condemning of the students because I realize it's easiest to take the path of least resistance but I condemn them for shirking their responsibilities. They are going to be the facilitators, the administrators, the bureaucrats, the scientists, and professionals of tomorrow and are going to run this society.

MICHEL: That is scary.

ERLE: And they are shirking their responsibility by not challenging and not wanting to look at the reality of the situation. Why not take a look at the real problems: let's use our skills to develop strategies so that we can deal with these things rather than continuously sweeping them under the carpet and saying, "Those are abstractions; they don't exist and this is the way it is," when everybody knows more or less, that that's not the case.

MICHEL: Take the criminology department at SFU...

PEAK: Please...

MICHEL: About a year and a half ago we had a small group of students. Pretty soon they were going to be parole officers, administrators, correctional facilitators, guards, you name it. These people came here and after a few hours of talking we realized that these people didn't have the foggiest clue of what prison was like: what was done...

ERLE: Or what its purposes were. Nothing.

PEAK: What did they think?

STEVE: They pictured us running around the yard with baseball bats chasing each other and homosexually raping every kid that came around the corner. The TV stuff.

TOM: They walked through the gate with their forehead calipers.

PEAK: Did they feel the bumps on your head?

NEIL: "Ah yes, we're going to figure them out. The missing link."

ERLE: One thing we might do to help educate these people is to get the first-year classes to make it a part of the curriculum that they come out here and talk to prisoners. Maybe at the beginning and end of their semester. They can go away and think and come back.

PEAK: They never have to come here at all?

ERLE: No. It's rare that they do.

NEIL: Even for parole officers...

ERLE: It's the textbook version.

MICHEL: The top two professors on corrections at SFU haven't been within a prison for years. These people are knowledgeable on correctional management, the old style and some of them are getting involved in evaluating programs which myself I see as very unethical.

ERLE: One is called the intensive parole package. They are going to take prisoners and force them through an experimental set of conditions and requirements, force them through some new program that some yakko has designed in some backroom. They're going to cram them through this little conformity tool, then the SFU criminology research centre are going to evaluate the programme and the people going through it. All the research done on prisoners is not confidential. They are going to use research material that prisoners were forced to take, not by gunpoint but, "Either you do these tests or you go to Kent, or you don't get parole, or you don't get out or you don't get transferred down." So it's definitely under duress. The information that they are getting isn't correct because people quite often don't respond well to coercion. A guy will get here from a provincial institution after spending a year there. He's all messed up because they really trash people in those places. He'll get here and they'll throw him in the induction program and they'll do a bunch of tests on the guy. Now the guy has just lost his freedom, his wife, his family, his possessions, and everything in the world and they're going to do tests on him and evaluate who that person is at probably the one point in the guy's life when he is the least who he is as a human being. Then they take that information and...

NEIL: They write up a package for him saying "Oh, you've got problems in this area, and this area, and we're going to give you these packages to fix all your problems..."

ERLE: "All prisoners are paranoid. They display anti-social personality disorders..."

NEIL: "And they are depressed!"

ERLE: Imagine that!

MICHEL: That was the Price Waterhouse study that they did all over the country. It was done by CSC under the psychological department services. At that time they felt threatened because there wasn't much going down in terms of psychological programmes. It was a slow year.

NEIL: So they came and found out that...

MICHEL: Yes, there were a lot of people suffering from anti-social behavior. And then there were 70 percent who felt depressed.

ERLE: Imagine that!

MICHEL: So they take it upon themselves to devise training and devise programs. They're going to help prisoners in terms of not feeling depressed; however, that depression comes from being in jail. It's a part of jail. Now I wish them good luck!

ERLE: Then they take packages and programs designed by people looking at this data and making decisions and they have no conception of what the prison environment is or who the prisoner is; they don't consider him an actual human being but something abstract. They design some program in some back room using their great scientific tools which don't have any use in the real world, and they cram these programs down which you know to be rather hazardous to your well-being; to your mental state, to your personal security, to your integrity. You take these programs which probably screw you up more than anything just to get out of prison. So the people who are going out into the street, not only have they been through the prison experiences which de-humanizes and de-socializes people. They grow their really weird programs which tell them how the world is but that's not how the world really is so the guy gets all these expectations in his head about what's going to be happening, and that everything is on the up and up, and he steps out the door and he has absolutely no skills to survive except for whatever remnants from what he had been before. Prisoners are usually pretty good survivors.

TOM: You have no idea of how big a dilemma it is to go into a grocery store and shop after you've done ten or fifteen years.

ERLE: Or order a meal in a restaurant.

MICHEL: Or talk on the phone.

ERLE: Its like being assaulted with questions as some waitress is standing over you pressuring you into ordering. "I don't care if you put ketchup on it! Just give me a hamburger. Straight Up! Now! Move!" " And when the prisoner fails on the street they say, "Well the little bastard must have been really deceptive and pulled the wool over all of us."

NEIL: A genius. A master of deceit! A genius who we can't trust with anything. So we just have to warehouse him and keep him there forever.

MICHEL: It's very interesting to go through the history of programs within prisons because they are so specialized it's like a closed world. Very closed and they can do whatever they want and usually do..

ERLE: Smoke and mirrors.

MICHEL: Throughout it started with one program. It failed. They got the result of the recidivism rate and it was still the same; "So maybe we'll do it that way." They give the new program a shot and it fails again. You've got a whole history of failures within correctional programs. All of them have failed.

ERLE: And they think it has nothing to do with the programs; it has nothing to do with the environment in which they give them. It's just that these goddamned prisoners won't cooperate. They are getting more coercive as time goes on because they can justify it. "Look, they simply won't cooperate. They're just deceiving us." So then they develop a standard test of intelligence—"The structure of intelligence." They've identified 126 components of intelligence...

STEVE: I think criminality is one.

ERLE: They are using this in a cognitive lifeskills program here in induction and testing people to tell them where their brain is broken and how to go about fixing it.

NEIL: Let me give you an example, they do tests on you and they'll test 126 areas and then find out "OK, you're good at reading comprehension but not public speaking." They turn it into a computer graph and they take all the areas that are low and give you packages to correct them with exercises.

ERLE: We're told that this test is across the board: accepted and used by professionals all around North America. We had somebody do a library search on campus...

MICHEL: We can't find one goddamn reference...

NEIL: There's no reference to it anywhere or anytime...

MICHEL: This is developed by a private outfit in the States...

PEAK: Sounds like the Church of Scientology...

ALL: Yes!

ERLE: That's probably the organization behind it.

NEIL: That's exactly it. They're rewriting what cognitive intelligence is. If you're not a good public speaker, "Well, by God, we're going to make you a good public speaker whether you want it or not! You're going to be one, because that's the problem with your criminality!"

PEAK: If you had only been a Toastmaster.

NEIL: Then you would never have been a criminal. They make their quantum leaps of logic.

ERLE: Meanwhile, the guy will just speak a lot better when he robs a bank: "Will everyone please get on the floor! Lower yourselves!" And he'll do it in two languages, for Christ's sake. ❖

GRAVE SITE

Joe Murphy was a perplexed man. In all his years in construction work he'd never run into anything like this before. Yesterday it had started. Eight were discovered by the end of the day. Another eight this morning and it wasn't even coffee break yet, and here came bad news in the form of Willy Davis, one of his three Cat operators.

"Three more over on lot thirteen," Willy reported, and shaking his head went back the way he'd come.

Since the first had been found yesterday, only a skeleton crew of Murphy's most trusted men had remained on the job. Skeleton crew—the ambiguity of the phrase was not lost on Murphy. They were being piled over on Lot Ten, covered by a huge tarp. There were nineteen now, nineteen skeletons in unmarked graves on the side of the hill, on the property of the now-demolished BC Penitentiary. Murphy didn't like it one bit.

Murphy stood on the hilltop looking down at the only remaining structure of the BC Pen. It was the oldest part of the penitentiary, the gatehouse. The historians of the community had gotten up a petition to save the gatehouse as a historical landmark. Murphy could not help thinking, however, that if he moved into this subdivision, which he had no intention of doing, he wouldn't want a reminder of the misery and suffering that the gatehouse was a symbol of. A scowl formed on his brow as he thought of the endless hours of pain the poor devils had suffered in captivity in the prison. Visions of destitute lonely caged men flooded his mind. Whippings, starvation, darkness, long cold lonely hours—he shook his head to rid himself of the images. He turned his attention to the blueprint on the drafting table next to him, but the images persisted as if he were possessed.

A horn sounded, bringing Murphy out of his reverie. It was the vice-president of the construction company Murphy worked for. He went to meet the executive.

"Hello Joe."

"Matt."

"Any more?"

"Eleven so far this morning."

"Jesus." The executive leaned on the company truck and covered his eyes with his hands. Then peeking out between fingers he continued. "If news of this hits the market, we're finished."

"You think I don't know that?" Commented Murphy.

"What about these men?" He indicated the six remaining workers.

"What about them?"

"Can you trust them to keep their mouths shut?"

"I've been there and back with these guys, they won't talk," assured Murphy.

"I don't know Murphy, I don't know about this shit. I've checked it every which way. There is no record of any graves being up here anywhere. I don't like it." And the executive shook his head.

"Do you think I do, Matt? I tell you it gives me the creeps. It's playing on me." Murphy was noticeably agitated.

"Take it easy, Murphy." The executive insisted. "We've got to keep our heads about this. You going to be okay?"

"Yeah, I guess so." But Murphy wasn't at all sure about that.

"There's going to be a big bonus in this for you and your men. Keep looking. I'll be back as soon as I can."

By lunch another five unmarked graves had been found, but from lunch right up until quitting time no more bodies were discovered. Murphy was on his way to his car when Willy Davis caught up to him. "Boss."

"Yeah, Willy?" Murphy thought Willy looked ten years older than he had that morning. His face was drawn and pale, and he looked completely worn out.

"Jesus boss, you don't look so good, you look like I feel." Willy said.

"I know—I know—this thing." And he indicated the job site with a wave of his hand. "Well it's plain spooky. What do you say we go for about ten whiskeys."

"Sounds about right, boss; I'll meet you at Diggers, okay?"

Joe Murphy and Willy Davis had worked together and been friends for about ten years. They had plenty in common. Both were about the same age and had two children, one boy and one girl. Their wives were friends, and they ate at each other's place once a week. Willy's wife usually made pork roast, and Joe's roast beef. On Sundays in season, Joe and Willy watched the NFL together. They were hard-working men, confident in themselves and easy-going. So after an hour's hard drinking, which in itself was unusual for these two men, Willy picked a fight with another Diggers regular. With Murphy cheering him on, Willy beat the man badly. Standing in the parking lot later, Willy said. "What happened?" And he looked at Murphy as if he hoped Murphy could explain what had just taken place.

Murphy shrugged his shoulders and looked bewildered. "I don't know, Willy."

Willy looked at the blood on his hands. "I don't go around beating people up."

Murphy took Willy by the shoulders. "Willy, I was hoping you'd kill that guy, and I'm not like that either."

"So what's happening, Joe?"

"I don't know Willy, it must be stress. What with the goings on at the job site, well I guess it's had its effect on us." Willy just shook his head in disbelief, and Joe continued. "Just go home Willy. Forget about this and try and get some sleep."

"Yeah, okay Joe. I am tired, so tired."

Joe watched as Willy got in his car and drove away. Then Joe got in his own car. He was tired too. More tired than he could ever remember being. He felt like he could sleep forever.

As tired as Murphy was, he got very little sleep. The sleep he did get was disturbed by bad dreams. He tossed and turned all night. In the morning his wife told him he was moaning and groaning in his sleep. She asked him what he'd been dreaming about, but he couldn't remember except that it was about the prison.

His wife made him breakfast, but he couldn't eat. He laced his second cup of coffee with Bourbon, something he'd never done before in the morning. When he left for work, he left behind a worried wife.

Now he sat in his car at the jobsite. No one else was there yet. Twice his car phone had rung on the way to work. Both times it had been a wife of two of his

remaining workers, and both times it was to say their husbands would not be in to work this day.

He was staring vacantly out of his car's windshield when Willy Davis opened his car door and got in. It wasn't until Willy shut the door that Murphy was aware of his presence. The two men looked at each other. Nothing had to be said. It was obvious that whatever it was affected both men. Murphy said, "Two no-shows already."

"Who?" Asked Willy.

"MacIntyre and Bowen."

"That makes four then, because Stonehouse and Ross aren't coming either," stated Willy.

"We've had tough jobs before, but nothing like this," put in Murphy.

Willy readily agreed, then added, "Do you believe in spirits and ghosts?"

"I don't know, I didn't before, but I'm not so sure now," replied Murphy.

"I never used to either, but something weird is happening here. Whatever it is, it's affecting us. Like I'm just not myself." The sincerity on Willy's face was real.

"Yeah, I know, Willy, but what are we going to do?"

Willy just shrugged his shoulders. Then both men turned their attention to the sound of Ned Johnson's pickup truck pulling up beside them.

Ned jumped out with a smile on his face, slammed the old truck's door, then seeing Willy and Joe with their haggard expressions, he started laughing.

Ever since Ned had gotten out of prison six years ago, he'd worked for Murphy. Ned was a hard man to read. Murphy often wondered what made him tick, but he'd come through when the chips were down. He was a hard worker and good at his job.

Murphy remembered Ned had done five years in the BC Pen for armed robbery. It occurred to Murphy that Ned was not bothered by what was going on at the job-site. Murphy rolled down his window and said, "Come here, Ned."

Ned walked over and said, "You don't look so good, boss, you look like you seen a ghost or something." Again he started laughing.

Murphy and Willy looked at each other, then back at Ned.

Ned reached for the door handle and opened it. "Move over, boss, I'll drive. You don't look up to it." And again he laughed as he got in behind the wheel.

He started Murphy's Oldsmobile, and put it in reverse and backed off the lot. He drove toward the freeway, and once under way he said, "I did time in that prison."

Murphy said, "Yeah I know."

Willy nodded he knew too.

Ned continued, "It's different living in prison... the rules of society wouldn't be anything more than a weakness to exploit." He smiled at the thought. "After years of being objects of hate, the guards become hateful. They turn their hate on the cons. The convicts mirror it back at the guards." Ned hesitated to let that sink in.

"Over the hundred or so years of the Pen's existence, many atrocities occurred." Ned seemed to be looking into the past, almost as if it wasn't really Ned speaking at all, or so it seemed to Murphy and Willy.

"In the early part of the Pen's history there was nothing else here. To get to the Pen, they came in boats on the river. They entered through the aqueducts. The aqueducts massed the prison from beneath. The wardens' word was law. They buried the

dead on the hill. Men who wouldn't be missed, or had no one to claim their bodies, or had to be moved quietly from population." Ned looked at his passengers for effect.

"When I was there I overheard a con tell another guy that in 1960, after a week of hard rain, the ends of coffins were sticking out of the hill." This caused Ned to laugh and shake his head. "This guy and several other cons got the job of replanting them. That's when it started."

For a while Ned just drove, then continued. "It was as if the spirits of the dead men in the unmarked graves combined with the hatred and violence that was the very foundation of the prison. Depression settled over guards and prisoners alike. Prisoners attacked guards at the slightest provocation. In turn sometimes guards beat the prisoners to death. There was an insanity abounding in the prison. Many cons, and some guards too, killed themselves, their erratic emotions too much for them to bear." Ned stopped talking at this point and stared out the windshield as he drove.

After a while Murphy said, "What are you saying Ned, and where are you taking us?"

Ned came back to reality, or so it seemed. "The truth has to be told. I'm taking you to the *Vancouver Sun*."

"Hold on here a minute," Murphy said. "I don't know what the truth is."

"Sure you do, boss. The truth is there's graves all over the side of the hill. Graves that no one knows anything about except us, and those who put them there," Ned stated.

"If we go to the papers with this, the company would lose a fortune. I'd get fired for sure, probably so would the rest of the guys," explained Murphy.

"If you got fired, the crew would quit. We work for you, not the company," Willy was quick to put in.

"Boss, you've been lining the company's pockets with gold long enough. Most of the contracts the company gets are because of you. You've got the best name in the business," Ned added.

"Remember when you said you'd like to take the crew and start a profit-sharing company. The men are all for it. I speak for every last man," Willy said.

Perplexed, Murphy said, "I don't know. The company has been good to me."

"You've been good to the company, and good for it! I think Ned is right. The truth has to be told."

"I don't know for sure, but the way I figure it, things around the jobsite are going to get worse if the truth isn't told. And what about the people who move into those houses we're building? Will it be safe for them?" Ned asked.

"What makes you think everything will be all right if the truth is told?" asked Murphy.

"Do you know what day it is?" Ned asked.

Murphy looked at his watch and said, "August 10th."

"Do you know what August 10th is?" asked Ned, then without waiting for an answer he continued. "It's a prisoners' holiday. Several years ago the committees from all the prisons in Canada got together. They decided the prisoners should go on a fast, and refuse to work. It was in memory of all the prisoners who died in prison fighting for their rights. They have it on August 10th. Now you don't think

all this shit happened and came to a head on August 10th by coincidence, do you?"

Murphy agreed it seemed a little weird.

Willy said, "If you ask me, we should go to the papers with it."

Ned added, "If nothing else, Joe, you got to think of the men."

"Yeah," Murphy agreed. "I guess you're right. The truth should be told." Having said it, Murphy immediately felt better.

"Good!" Willy exclaimed.

"It has to be done," Ned added. ❖

GOODNIGHT, JANE, GOODNIGHT

I will touch you,
Like the wind
Tonight
When you sleep.

And waking
Like a whisper
From the mouth of silence.

I will be a shadow.

The moon must call.

Tonight, when you sleep
Calm
As summer clouds
I will love for you too.

I will touch you
Deeply,
Where no man has been.

In dreams.

THE SOLDIERS CAME

The old man sat
Portrayed
Amid a frame of loneliness.

A child
In battle dress
An agent of despair.

Spread like wine
Staining
The old man's solitude.

His gun
His god

His bullets
His domain.

The old man laughed
Aloud
His teeth broken.

Eyes black
As his loyalty
To his land.

Go soldier

He spoke
Spitting blood.

Before the sons
Of Ireland
Rise

To liberate
Their tears. ❖

THE REVOLT OF THE ROMANIANS

I first met Ceausescu in October 1941 at the Jilava military prison, where we shared the same cell for almost two months. As young Communists we were arrested by the fascist government for anti-Nazi activities. Then we met again in 1942 at the Caransebes Special Penitentiary near Timisoara, where we worked together in the same shop, painting toys and other objects, until 1944, when he was transferred to the Tirgu Jiu concentration camp. Forced to live closely with him for so long, I learned much about this young peasant, who was unaccustomed to life in the city and who, although he claimed to be a shoemaker, seemed incapable of learning a trade. He was both primitive in mentality and manner and endowed with remarkable intelligence.

His most striking feature, though, was the deep hatred he showed his fellow inmates, even though they were fighting for the same cause at the risk of death. Not directed at any one person, this was a general and impersonal hatred, which seemed to consume him. It took the form of a free-floating anger and contempt for other people, particularly people his own age or in positions he considered inferior to his own. He could not bear losing any contest and I recall that when he lost a game of chess in the prison he simply refused to speak with the winner. In his relations with the rest of us he seemed strangely empty of any normal human feelings.

The vicious side of his character, which was so clear to us young political prisoners, he somehow managed to hide from others, including Gheorghiu-Dej, the future leader of the Romanian Communist party and of the country, who himself was imprisoned at Caransebes during the war and then at Tirgu Jiu. In March 1965, before his death, Gheorghiu-Dej appointed Ceausescu as his successor. Ceausescu was then forty-seven, but he had not changed at all in twenty years. ❖

reprinted with permission from *The New York Review of Books*

THE PROCESSES OF DEMOCRATIZATION IN LATIN AMERICA [1988]

The political panorama of Latin America has been shifting. In virtually all of our countries processes of democratization have been restored, which, despite the diversity of contents, significations, and implications, have tended in most cases to be more an expression of desires than a concrete realization. Even though we know that the solutions to the grave problems which we suffer cannot occur in the bat of an eye, democratic forces are coexisting with the sectors which hold the strings to the structures imposed by authoritarianism. These structures are, among others, the foreign debt, the armed forces, the intact power structures of dominant classes, etc.

The cohabitation of these threats compromises the construction of a democratic order and puts the credibility of the governments who are assuring us that they are stabilizing the situation into doubt. Hence, it is important to clarify somewhat the idea of democracy to which we are referring, and to elaborate on the problems which should be confronted by the popular sectors in Latin America.

Regarding the idea of democracy

The concept of democracy to which we refer is not the same as that which has been concretely applied, in a more or less hegemonic form, in Europe or the United States. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the judicial-political forms of these countries have influenced some sectors of Latin America, to the point where we have all been inspired to have their constitutions dictate our own. However, during the long history which separates the independence stage from the present, the contents of the idea of democracy have varied.

There has been a change of perspective on the part of the popular movement in Latin America. In the first place, to speak of democracy presupposes raising the subject of its capacity of survival and its right to auto-determination; that is, to look at the goals of democratic freedom and the necessities of life of the pueblo¹ and to understand the struggle for democracy as a struggle for national liberation.

This implies breaking the system of domination and overcoming the structures of injustice which oppress our pueblos. The Cuban Revolution marks a particular stage and a hope for change in breaking the dominating hegemony of the United States. In Chile, Salvador Allende attempted to construct a socialist order through democratic means and was defeated.

Today it is democracy which has varied and often confused interpretations, depending on the historical reality of the country. Democracy and socialism are threatened by painful realities like the civil war in El Salvador and the attacks on the Sandinista revolution, which has succeeded in shattering the hegemonic power of domination in Central America and which is looking to consolidate the achievements of the revolution despite the permanent aggression to which it is subjected:

military, economic, and political aggression on the part of the United States, which does not want to lose its hegemony.

In light of all these concerns, we must ask ourselves about the type of democracy that we wish to construct and about political systems that ensure real participation in decision making by the people.

We know that the democratic regime was, at the start, a revindication of the bourgeoisie. Amidst the appearance of equality of individuals before the law, this powerful class was able to establish profound social and political differences. Henceforth, the subject of democracy itself has been identified with bourgeois ideology. Thus, socialism was formulated more as a system of economic and social justice than as a struggle for democracy.

We could say schematically that there are two tendencies today which divide the problem of socialism and democracy. On the one hand there are those who have forgotten the greater tasks of socialism and have come to identify it with the conquest of political rights, which, to a certain point, can be conceded by capital. On the other hand there are those who view democracy as something tactical, as a transitory step which should later be overcome by the next step which they will call socialism.

Both perspectives, each in its own way, sacrifice part of the equation which exists between the struggle for socialism and the struggle for democracy.

If we want to get beyond this discussion and advance in the construction of an ample and participatory democracy, we must comprehend that this is not merely the reconquest of the electoral franchise, nor the inevitable result of the socialization of the means of production: the long-term prospects of a popular conquest require a transformation of the nature of politics and the systems of representation. The bourgeois institutions must be subverted, in order to reformulate the relations between these institutions and the pueblo. The bourgeoisie: the point is to change them.

The liberal bourgeois system, ideologically hidden behind (formal) democracy, has always represented itself as a representative system, claiming that the will of the pueblo was expressed in its institutions. One should add that in Latin America this same "will" has risen up one and a thousand times against the "representative" institutions to denounce their deceit.

Thus, a challenge for real democracy is without doubt the production of new forms of representation, that is, where the pueblo is present under its own forms and not using the bourgeois institutions.

The authoritarian map: The harsh inheritance of the dictatorships

Latin America comprises dependent countries and suffers from the tension of belonging to the US sphere of influence, not only economically, but also socially and politically. It is a continent that situates itself between the potential wealth of its natural and human resources and the poverty that derives from the debt; between political systems that attempt to install restricted, conditional democracies and military dictatorships that respond to external interests.

Latin American countries live on a political pendulum, swinging from popularly elected governments to military governments which assume power in the name of "National Security" and impose repressive measures that generate terrible violations of human rights.

The armed forces have been totally changing the role that their respective constitutions had assigned them. They have moved from being the guarantors of sovereignty to occupation forces in their own land, supporting the local oligarchies in alliance with foreign powers, governments of exclusion to the majority of people. It would be tedious to reveal each of the situations which confirm this tendency. It is enough to remember the implantation of long-lasting military dictatorships with the support of governments like that of the US, which came to constitute dynasties that erased all vestiges of popular organization and democracy. Batista in Cuba, Somoza in Nicaragua, Duvalier in Haiti, and Stroesser in Paraguay are just a few examples.

Only a short time ago, during the 1970s, practically all of the countries of the continent were enduring bloody dictatorships. This phase, which would be inaugurated by the military coup of 1964 in Brazil, introduced a new fact: the armed forces began to take a more decisive role, imposing a model of society inspired by the National Security Doctrine.

This doctrine has its origin in the rupture that Cuba inflicts on the post-war strategy best known as the Cold War. If, since 1945, the hypothesis of confrontation has situated the potential conflict between the Eastern bloc and the West, the United States realized in the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution that its security is not solely dependent on equalling or surpassing the military potential of the Soviets, but also on protecting the ideological frontiers interior to its own bloc. Later this conception would become more complicated in Latin America; and it would be the local armed forces which would be responsible to guard over the "internal security" of the different countries. Within this framework, all positions that depart from the parameters of the system of domination, which point to social demands, political dissidences, or proposals for structural changes would fall under suspicion and would be seen to "threaten" Western Christian civilization. From this ideological simplicity, it is sure that anyone can be accused as subversive, communist, etc. And examples abound.

When Salvador Allende assumed government through popular elections, changes commenced which the US considered dangerous to its hegemony. Thus, a campaign of destabilisation was generated by the CIA: the strike of the truck drivers, the paralysis of production, the blockade of exports, and the eventual coup d'état led by General Augusto Pinochet. Thousands of Chileans are dispersed around the world, victims of the dictatorship now thirteen years into their exile. And the legacy of murder and imprisonment still continues.

Military coups also took place in Bolivia, where the instability of democratic processes is endemic and there have been more periods ruled by coups d'état than years of independence.

Uruguay, a country with a long democratic tradition, was shaken by the guerrilla movement, only to impose a dictatorship of the armed forces with its result of torture, political persecution and exile, which profoundly scarred the life of the country.

The dictatorship in Argentina imposed a new methodology of abduction and forced disappearance of people. The exportation of this abhorrent method to other countries of the region is evident, as is attested to in the cases of Uruguay, Chile, Honduras, Peru, Guatemala, El Salvador, Paraguay, and Colombia.

Two countries with substantial differences between them were not subjected to military regimes, and maintained bipartite systems: Venezuela and Colombia. In

Colombia the system comprises very strong guerrilla groups like the M-19 and very independent armed forces, which respond more to their own structures than to the constitutional government, which with great difficulty tries to administer the crisis.

With less institutional conflict, the armed forces in Venezuela respond in an organized fashion to the constitutional structures of the State: this is, perhaps, the only country in South America which was not influenced by the ideological conception of the National Security Doctrine.

Costa Rica is a true exception to the rest of the continent. It is a country without an army and with constitutional continuity, but which in recent years has been suffering a rapid militarization of its National Guard, because it is implicated in the regional conflict in Central America and is under stern pressure from the US. Its territory is used by the CIA and the Contras as a base of operations from which to attack Nicaragua.

In this rapid glance, we should not forget to mention the still-existing dictatorship of Alfredo Stroessner, which presents a paradigm case for the continent.

The democratic map: The challenge of democracy

The social, political, and economic deterioration that the Latin American pueblos started to suffer under the corrupted military dictatorships led to situations which put US hegemony in the area in jeopardy. The brutality of the methods used by the "defenders of security" unleashed protests channelled through governments, churches, unions, solidarity movements, etc. National and international protest campaigns against the dictatorships have forced the armed forces into a corner and have pressured them to initiate processes of democratization.

The Falklands War initiated a decisive stage and provoked another reflection on the theory of "ideological borders," relocating the Latin American problem on the axis of a North-South conflict.

For the international centres of power, the conclusion is obvious: the National Security Doctrine is in crisis and the armed forces no longer guarantee the interests which have been hidden behind the veneer of "Western Christian civilization."

Within this framework, and as a consequence of internal protest, significant changes begin to take place on the continent. The restoration of democracy potentially carries with it the possibility that old tendencies will be closed and that a period of profound transformations in our countries will be inaugurated. Nevertheless, there are many obstacles and threats to the realization of these changes. And on this point the examples abound as well.

In Peru, after the experience of the governments of General Velasco Alvarado and General Bermudez, and the constitutional government of Belaunde Terry, Alan Garcia took office and received with it a profound economic and social crisis, the intensification of terrorist acts by the *Sendero Luminoso*, and increased levels of repression from the armed forces. The cases of repression which have been denounced are terrible, as is the establishment of impunity for those who are responsible for real massacres. This situation is out of control for the present government, despite its efforts.

Guatemala, after twenty years of military dictatorships, was able to install a civil government presided over by Inicio Cerezo. This is a country with a large indige-

nous population which has suffered massacres, disappearances, kidnapping, and torture; a country where strategic villages have been implanted, similar to those of Vietnam, called "model villages" or "development centres," which are actually concentration camps. Under the civil government the repression and the disappearances have not decreased, nor have the "development centres" shrunk.

Honduras, under the government of President Azcona, is resigned to the US policy on Central America, which involves seeing its territory occupied militarily, not only by US bases and troops, but by the so-called contras who use Honduran territory to launch their military incursions into Nicaragua.

El Salvador is now seven years into its civil war. The government of Napoleon Duarte, conditional and powerless, submerged this small country into a liquidation of nearly fifty thousand people, as well as a large number of exiled and the growing deterioration of the social structure.

In Brazil, during the military regime, a law was passed granting amnesty to all members of the armed forces who were accused of human rights violations. After dominating the social and political arena for more than twenty years, the military handed over formal power to the civilians. Thus, the killings and the torture committed remained unaccounted for.

Uruguay recuperated its constitutional government, presided over by Sanguinetti, and an amnesty was declared for members of the armed forces accused of human rights violations. Today the Uruguayan pueblo has forced a referendum to declare the amnesty unconstitutional.

In Bolivia, President Estenssoro repressed the demands of the miners to preserve their jobs. The Bolivian Labour Central (COB) was accused and must often go underground. This country is trapped in misery that seems impossible to surmount, a situation worsened by the fall on the international market of the price of metal, the mainstay of the Bolivian economy. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that US troops, under the pretext of the "anti-drug war," stayed in the region longer than announced. Meanwhile, the Bolivian army was used to control and repress protests and popular expressions.

Argentina suffered a military uprising over Easter, in which rebel officers demanded an amnesty for the crimes committed by the armed forces in the preceding period. This attitude sheds some light on the weakness of democracy to restructure the armed forces which still maintain their repressive structure intact. The trials and condemnation of the military juntas are remarkable facts, but they are not enough on their own to prevent the repetition of such situations. Under pressure from the military, the radical government conceded a hidden amnesty behind the name of "due obedience law."

Democracies or Democrtatorships?

In an article that I read only a short time ago, Eduardo Galeano displays a fine irony in characterizing the current processes of democratization in Latin America as "democrtatorships." In synthesis, he states that the military has vacated the presidential chair in order to stand behind it. In more academic terms, he refers to a type of democracy which can be registered historically as under tutelage.

There are many elements which make a democracy undertake a process of

tutelage. It is enough to mention two: foreign debt and armed forces.

I will not spend much time on this point, but it is doubtlessly the foreign debt which most weighs on the new democratic governments, limiting their range of action. The capacity for growth in our economies is not only in question today, but it remains so in the future. The debt continues to grow, hence all of our efforts only serve to perpetuate it. This is the mechanism which reproduces the death machine: the increase of malnutrition and marginalization, the shortage of health care, education and housing, and the lack of resources for economic and social growth.

According to ECLA (Economic Commission for Latin America), the terms of exchange in Latin America have deteriorated by 15 percent in the last five-year period. To this structural factor is added in recent years the foreign debt which obliges many countries to transfer heavy quotas of their resources to the industrialized world, thus exacerbating the difference between rich and poor countries.

The new democracies receive a harsh inheritance from the dictatorships, and with scarce resources and in light of the impossibility or incapacity to engage political alternatives, they are administrators of the crisis.

To this must be added the second element: while the foreign debt undermines structural opportunities to stabilize democratic processes, the armed forces, which were responsible for the repression against the pueblos, in order to impose their models of social injustice, continue to pose a threat to the life of these pueblos.

The recent past, the crimes committed, the preponderant role of the military structure, are not being changed in order to redefine the role that the military should play in the democratic process. Neither has there been a restructuration of the armed forces toward social integration, nor have the apparatuses of repression been dismantled.

To this conflictive panorama must be added the situation of structural debility in which the popular and political sectors find themselves. It is not difficult to see the grim situation that the present democracies must deal with, a profile which more and more is determining that "democracy under tutelage" becomes the model for the new Latin American sociopolitical processes.

What then is the democratic strategy that we should follow? This question draws us back to the old discussion between "real democracy" and "formal democracy."

On many occasions, the manner in which this problem has been presented has produced serious confusion in the heart of popular movements. This results from the notion that formal democracy is how power is exercised by the state, while sovereign power and real democracy relate to who exercises power. Thus, the problem is presented like this: "we don't want another political system, since this one is 'formally' just; what we want is for the pueblo to 'really' exercise its sovereignty."

This is a grave error! This separation obscures the key problem that exists behind the struggle for "socialist democracy," the knowledge that who exercises power is intimately related to how it is exercised. In other words, the liberal bourgeois institutions are not bourgeois because those who occupy their posts are from the bourgeoisie, but because they are institutions which sustain a political, economic, and social system that insures bourgeois exploitation.

Therefore, it is not possible for us to have a socialist democracy without a new system of representation in new institutions. The resolution of the crisis of democracy that we talk about so much these days involves the crisis of a form of democracy:

the liberal, bourgeois democracy.

Naturally, we do not want to suggest that the vote in general elections is strictly a bourgeois form of representation. By no means. This is simply the form used by the bourgeoisie, and with success, since it has been adapted to the institutional mode of the bourgeois state. Thus, it is not a matter of combatting the vote, or the parliament, but of challenging a certain judicial and institutional order which has been the support of bourgeois liberalism for long periods.

Hence, when we speak of a "representational crisis," we are alluding to the inability of the institutional and party organs of bourgeois representation to direct the pueblo, to respect some of its legitimate demands, and to make viable some historical-political aspirations of a socialist stripe.

Of course this task of reformulating representation is always concrete, historical and national. Concrete, in the sense that it does not exist if it is not conceived in terms of a specific conjuncture; that is, as a challenge which must be resolved in an irreducible here and now. Historical, because the forms that must be transformed result from a long process and require a particular response of the pueblo in order to create, imagine, and practice new ways of being present in the state. And national, since the common experience of domination and exploitation that Latin American nations share is not sufficient to erase the singularities of each region, each country, and each pueblo. The challenge is to take on the great task that lies ahead to construct socialist democracy. But this task is not "univocal." Every nation must find its own path, guided by common values, but respecting the particularity of the life and history of each pueblo. ❖

Translated by Michael Hoechsmann and Victor Porter

THROUGH A PANOPTICON, LIGHTLY

Editorial Note

This project originated in a writing exercise in which each of us submitted a description of his cell at Kent Maximum-Security Institution, Agassiz, BC. These were in turn edited to generate a catalogue or inventory that included at least two images or fact descriptions from each piece of writing. From this listing each of us chose the lines needed to compose his own poem, recognizing that the product was essentially collaborative in nature. The basic editing principles for the inventory were those suggested in Allen Ginsberg's postcards to Rik McWhinney, which are reproduced below. —Dr. P.J. Murphy

July 27, 1979

Dear Rik McW—

No time to correspond. I asked City Lights to send you a pack of books of mine.

If you get a chance, to correct yr. corny poetry style, read the regular factual no-bullshit poetry of WC [William Carlos] Williams if you can find any in anthologies. He is straightforward. No pretty roses & corny thorns, images that have been re-used "like razorblades" until they're dulled. "No ideas but in things," that is, don't write poetry, write little fact descriptions of what you see & hear around you with your own senses, with simple real knife & fork & spoon & napkin & cup words—forget 5 & 10 Store beauty, forget "Beauty" but write about real details of a fence or bed or wall or moon or hand or daydream or car exhaust noise or cough, if you want to communicate with others.—*Allen Ginsberg*

Aug. 27, 1979

Dear Rik MCW:

I can't keep correspondence, travelling.

Yes, Whitman for spirit (breath) expressed in minute details, lots of little red wheelbarrows & red chickens in Whitman, and a drop of perspiration falling off the mustache of a prisoner in chow line-up.

You can only write for real about details you observe with your six senses (sight, sound, taste, touch, smell, mind a combo of the other five)—you'll only make loud noises about anything more abstract, but when I see a spoon thru your eyes, I see thru your eyes. Like you see thru WCW or WW or AG. Ground your mind in minute particulars, "take care of the little ones—" *Allen Ginsberg*

SECOND CARCEREALIST MANIFESTO•DECLARATION OF 1 APRIL 1990

To those still blinded by the frivolous rhetoric of the Panoptical World Correctional Services Inc., we declare to you and to the entire braying sociological, criminological, psychological, philosophical, and even literary body of contemporary criticism:

- 1) All authors must deny responsibility for pieces written. (If responsibility must be given, it shall be arbitrarily assigned to an unknowing person.)
- 2) Our writing has nothing to do with anything—it is merely a vision lost.
- 3) Our writing searches to create an equal unreality to that in which we live.
- 4) Prison writing is the art of creating motion in inertia.
- 5) The best prison writing is writing you will not want to read again.
- 6) Prison writing should distil the process of thought, leaving the reader incarcerated by its perverse logic.
- 7) Our writing is successful when it enrages our keepers; in fact, it is only meritorious when censored.
- 8) At each turn of its thought, society will find us wanting.
- 9) Our writing will exist beyond all warranty expiry dates.
- 10) Our writing can only be silenced by the walls of these prisons falling down on us. We will continue in our paltry efforts, like termites eating away at the foundations.
- 11) Prison writing is the unheard screams of a molested child.
- 12) The act of prison writing is not necessarily confined to a page.
- 13) We have nothing to do with literature; but we are quite capable, when necessary, of making use of it like anyone else.
- 14) Prison writing should not be ignored—not because of its content, but because of its consequences.

Bureau of Carcerealist Research:
Samuel Estragon, Nanook, Tomaso Bark,
Dede Moonbeam, Trog Dyte, Fletcher Christian, Baron Kubalchich

INVENTIVE INVENTORIES

1. VENTING

Only time will tell.
For the ducts contain dust,
blown in by the hot
dry summer air.

A vent, high in the wall,
seems to serve no purpose
other than to rearrange
the dust...

It seems to be everywhere.
It appears mysteriously
almost
magically.

The air duct
is my worst enemy.

2. REMAINDERED

The cell is, as I stated, temporary.
Cardboard boxes stuffed under the bottom bunk.
Metal lockers with combination locks
To lock up our valuables.

Imprisonment is unchangeable.
Two steel bunks fastened to one wall.
Screws crudely embedded into plaster.
Only people are changeable.

I read the walls, swept the floor, used the toilet.
There's not a lot of things to do.
It's count time.
Eleven o'clock and the day is over.

The cell holds what it should.
Nothing.

3. CIRCULATION

The air duct is my worst enemy
Dust seems to be every place
It appears mysteriously, almost magically
The porcelain of the sink and toilet gleam with virginity

I read the walls
Sweep the floor
Use the toilet
There is only so much I can do

It's count time
My door is closed for inventory
Only muffled sounds seep through
These walls now suck the years out

Forcing the awkward, mechanical door
I look both ways, as taught when a child

4. SHELF-LIFE

The door's glass is partially darkened with a black felt marker.
It's count time. This door is closed for inventory.

11:00, the day is over.
Our lives seem strictly choreographed by the opening and closing
of this steel door.

The room is a bathroom, converted into a guest room.
The porcelain of the sink and toilet gleams with virginity.
Having read the walls, swept the floor, I use the toilet.
The toilet is too high to be comfortable; it feeds my insecurities.

The ducts contain dust blown in by the hot summer air.
Dust seems to be everywhere, it appears mysteriously,
almost magically.
That vent high in the wall seems to serve no purpose other than to rearrange the
dust.
The air duct is my worst enemy.

There's not a lot of other things to do.
We are on a dusty shelf in a forgotten corner of a vast warehouse.

5. DURACELL

A small makeshift mirror
Hangs.
Dust seems to be everywhere.
Only time will tell.

There is an NHL schedule
By the TV.
The shelf holds what it should,
Nothing.

My door is closed
For inventory.
Only muffled sounds seep through.
I will live forever.

Screws,
Crudely embedded in the plaster.

6. NAMELESS CELL

The cell is temporary, only time will tell.
These walls now suck the years out:
imprisonment is unchangeable; only people change.
I will live forever like the two steel bunks fastened to the wall.

Only muffled sound seeps through
This room, a bathroom converted to a guest room;
The television is my worst enemy—
It feeds my insecurity.

Screws crudely embedded into plaster,
Scarred inside their memory;
Long narrow vertical windows,
The cell holds what it should, nothing.

11:00 comes and the day is over
My door is closed for inventory.

7. OFF THE WALLS

Makeshift mirror hangs suspended from a discarded shoelace
Screws crudely embedded into plaster
Some dusty shelf in a forgotten corner
These walls now suck the years out.

Two steel bunks fastened to one wall
A vent high in the wall
Next to the bookcase is the institutional shelf.
Spiderwebs of cables linking

A pin board bearing notes and messages
An NHL schedule beside the TV
Long narrow vertical windows
Only muffled sounds seep through

I read the walls
It's just that there's not a lot of other things to do.

8. STOCK-TAKING

It's count time.
My door is closed for inventory.
11:00 comes.
The day is over.

Looking up as if watching a movie
On an invisible screen.
Strictly choreographed by the opening
And closing of my steel mechanical door.

Imprisonment is unchangeable.
Only people are changeable.
The cell is, as I stated, temporary.
These walls now suck the years out.

I will live forever.
Only time will tell.

9. PLUS ÇA CHANGE...

Inside some dusty shelf in a forgotten corner of a vast warehouse
Two steel bunks fastened to one wall
Long narrow vertical windows
A sink and toilet with a virgin gleam

The air duct is my worst enemy
It's a vent, high in the wall
Containing dust from the hot, dry, outside air
The mysterious, almost magical, source of dust

There are always muffled sounds
The toilet is too high to be comfortable
My visitor is only part of the furniture
The walls suck the years out

Imprisonment is unchangeable
It is difficult to say anything bad about cells

10. LOST ONES

A tarmac
A fence
Some glass
Another double fence

The trees
And
The side
Of a mountain

Some dusty shelf
In a forgotten corner
Of a vast
Warehouse

Scarred
Inside their memory

11. NIGHT THOUGHTS

Jan. 20, 1990

Opened books lie face down on the desk. A pad of lined paper is bed to more than words, glasses, pen-top, or comb. Beside the long-neck reading lamp, black coffee in the brown mug cools. Cigarette papers, a tin of tobacco, an ashtray with the long night's debris. Nothing on the desk seems finished, suggests instead continuity—like this prison cell.

Pressed wallboard, expanses of bare sterile white—my recent arrival not yet marked by the customary *Penthouse* paper-love. Steel desk, narrow tired-spring cot, a plastic chair. None of these is standard Ikea, decided upon after hours of finger-walking catalogues, comparing lean paycheque dollars against listed prices. No. All furniture here supplied gratis. And if not so much for comfort, then for durability.

Hands made this furniture, hands like mine—state-owned—cutting, measuring, tacking together with spot-welds under the concepts of self-sufficiency and the teaching of honest labour. Work to take pride in? These furniture-making hands remember better the easy feel of cold steel, or the weight of a gun, or the gentle pressure needed to cap white powder, to forget or ignore the past or present walls closing in, cell-like.

Jan. 21, 1990

Cement nails embedded in wood tell of a previous occupant's propensity to hand clothes in ordered rows. He was a man, perhaps, who never used a coat hanger, since none were left (not even the customary one lying in dirt and dust at the bottom of the open-faced closet at bed's foot). One assumes, of course, that such is the case. But what if, one lonely night, if, in his anger, he drove these nails one by one into the walls' flesh, systematically penetrating that unfeeling hardness?

Jan. 22, 1990

Two things now grace the wall above the desk: a postcard from Ontario and a typed copy of a poem. On the card, a yellow-eyed timber wolf stares intently from a winter landscape. Bare tree limbs create a background. A lover sends the card.

Things are black/white in the Kafka poem, like the typewritten words on the white page. The finality of flesh against stone is as immovable as the wall, as sure as Kafka's end. It is a recurring theme, a recurring dream:

BC Pen. The great grey wall rising into night. There is movement, sensed, behind me. A sudden force turning my shoulder, turning me and throwing me against the stone. Sinking down, down into the echoes of gunfire. This dream repeated over the years, again and again.

12. BLOOD TEST

The wood-grain panelling would fit in almost anywhere. The many shelves filled with books or ornaments and pictures look very attractive. The blinds and curtains go so well with the rest of the decor—even the window is just the right size, about three by three. This definitely doesn't look like any cell I have ever been in. They say my cell is situated in "the ghetto," but I can't see why. I find my cell to be very comfortable and many of my friends comment on how nice it is here when they drop by to visit me. Of course this is one of the four "bigger" cells (or rooms as the staff and many others call them here), but even the smaller cells seem so removed from any I have spent time in before. There is no cement, no bars or steel doors. It always amazes me that I can lock people out but I am never locked in. Seems almost unnatural. I often think of how fortunate I am to be here; it seems so far away from Millhaven or Kent. In fact it seems to me that those places are in another lifetime. They are slowly becoming just a very vague memory. I can hardly believe that I've been in prison almost twelve years straight. The time seems to have become really distorted these past two or three years. I do sort of remember the "hard time," but it really amazes me that I left Kent only four and a half years ago. It seems much, much longer. Ferndale is almost too good; in fact, it sometimes scares me how good I have it here. I sometimes wonder what it will be like to be on the outside. Will it be as good? Really, what a strange question for a prisoner to think. Yet that question does persist. It often causes me to think about my friends. Those who live in real prisons and are locked up in real cells. I might not remember them so well now, but I will never forget. The clanging, the banging of doors. The concrete, bars, and chain-link fences with barbed wire curling at the top.

I remember the cell of a man who was murdered. As the unit cleaner I was asked to go clean it up after we were allowed out of our cells again. When the door was opened to that six-by-ten tomb, I was first struck by the stink. The blood was spattered on two of the walls, big drops, small drops, all over the place. It seemed strange to me that the blood should smell so much. The mattress was rolled up on the bed and as I approached it I saw the blood—all over the floor, soaked through the grey-striped mattress. I gagged. It wasn't red. It was almost black... I wanted to run. I didn't want to face death. I couldn't help thinking of the man I shot. I could see him, or more exactly I could hear him: "Oh my God." That's all he said: "Oh my God." What could I do?

I went to the cleaning room, filled a bucket with steaming hot water and disinfectant and returned to that cell and cleaned up that death. I scrubbed and washed those walls and that floor and carried that mattress out to the garbage bin. That cell was so far from here, yet I will always remember it.

13. PALIMPSEST I

Clothes in ordered rows
Pressed wallboard,
Expanse of bare sterile white,
No *Penthouse* paper-love.

Hands made this furniture,
Hands like mine: state-owned,
The concrete, bars, and chain-link fences
With barbed wire curling at the top.

Finality of flesh against stone
Immovable as the wall.
Bare tree limbs create a background.
A lover sends the card.

Window just the right size.
Will it be as good outside?

14. PALIMPSEST II

Open books lie face down,
Unfinished,
Suggests continuity,
Many shelves filled.

Past or present walls closing in,
Pressed wallboard, sterile white,
Unmarked by *Penthouse* paper-love.
A plastic chair.

Great grey wall, rising into night
BC Pen.
Hands made this furniture,
Hands like mine: state-owned.

Finality of flesh against stone,
Immovable as the wall. ♦

REVIEW

Ioan Davies. *Writers in Prison*.
Toronto: between the lines, 1990.

Prison writing is fast becoming a recognized genre. From Canada's solitary confinement cells to the Soviet Gulag, Ioan Davies explores the worlds, language, and themes prisoners offer us through their writings. *Writers in Prison* is an insightful work requiring readers to rethink their own particular experiences and language.

Divided into three main sections, *Writers in Prison* looks at themes pervasive in prison literature. Davies examines prisoners' use of narrative in various aspects of storytelling. And finally, he attempts to juxtapose and connect prison writing to "outside" daily concerns. One of the real bonuses of Davies's work is his guidance—and ideas—on how to read prison writing.

Professor Davies carries out his examination of prison literature through what he describes as "text," the writings of the incarcerated. And, while his investigation focuses mainly on those considered "prisoners of conscience," Davies also gives the texts of the criminal due consideration. The reason for this Davies states:

The experience of being in those [prisons] is also in part contained in the writing. Thus the texts that frame dominant institutions and the countertexts that try to map routes out of them provide one of the central thematics of our culture, and also of this book.

Davies identifies four basic themes within prison writing: Margin and Centre, Framing the Subject, The Consolations of Philosophy, and Violent Space. Through these, Davies not only portrays the prisoners' environments, but also their perceptions of themselves within those environments:

...The violent space that they inhabit... allows the participants to work out their relationships with each other against a mechanized text which is recognized as a human construct, rather than as a mechanized form of writing which is purely abstract...(78)

The unreal is made real; shadows are dispersed by light; the experience of imprisonment is clear.

The second section of *Writers in Prison* deals with one of the more common forms of "inside" writing: narrative. Almost every prisoner has a story to tell. And of those who write, most want "to tell it like it really is." However, for the most part these stories are rationalization, justification, or an explanation of the circumstance.

Here, Davies looks not only at what prisoners write, but also at the need motivating the writing:

...Personal survival is clearly an issue and how one survives is partly related to the strength of one's identification with the movement, with writing and with self... (143)

Confined by a world of prescribed texts, prisoners often create anti-text: Underground Man, Hollow Man, Hero—through these the prisoner can survive and, perhaps, even defeat the system confining him.

The final section of *Writers in Prison*, "Inscribing the Everyday," takes the world of the prisoner and draws an interconnectedness between institutional incarceration and "outside" experiences, which may also be forms of imprisonment. The main question Davies contends with in this part of the investigation is:

...does prison literature convey more to us than a separate existence of which we can never be a part, or must it always be appropriated as a mere metaphor? (219)

Davies answers this question. But the answer does not end either his text or that of the prisoners themselves.

Professor Davies has written a fine and thought-provoking book. *Writers in Prison* does more than define the genre. It shows us just how strong language is, and what it can do—inside prison as well as beyond it. Prisons, supposedly, are microcosms of the "real" world. Prison literature should therefore reflect this. "It is the ultimate cry of the oppressed;... also the eyes in a sightless world" (273). Well worth the read, *Writers in Prison* is a book that demands to be read more than once.

Ioan Davies is Professor of Sociology and Social Political Thought at Toronto's York University. Davies has been involved in prison education programs for many years. Some of his other accomplishments include authoring *African Trade Unions: Social Mobility and Political Change* and creating CBC's radio documentary *The View from Central Europe*. Professor Davies is currently compiling a study of British cultural Marxism. ♦

REVIEW

Jean Genet, *The Thief's Journal*,
trans. Bernard Frechtman. Grove Press, 1964.

Everything in this book is fictional and everything is true. (Serge 1972)

Contrary to what the title implies, *The Thief's Journal* is not the reconstruction of Genet's past. Rather, it is the construction of his present "...fixed with the help of the past..." (71). *The Thief's Journal* represents the transmutation of the factual autobiography of Genet the Homosexual Thief into the poetic myth of Genet the Saint. Unlike many prison writers, Genet does not regret his past, nor does he interpret imprisonment as death (Levi 1959; Serge 1972). Rather, he passionately embraces this opportunity for rebirth:

If I cannot have the most brilliant destiny, I want the most wretched, not for the purpose of a sterile solitude, but in order to achieve something new with such rare matter. (244)

Through this "rare matter" (this wretched life) Genet hopes to achieve saintliness.

Saintliness, for Genet, entails "...turning pain to good account... forcing the devil to be God... [and]...obtaining the recognition of evil..." (205). This requires him to sacrifice his entire self to this wretched destiny, to embellish it and, thereby, to acquire absolute condemnation by society. While committing himself to evil demands that he oppose society, he does not attempt to live "outside" of society. Rather, he must oppose it from within to ensure that his efforts are recognized and condemned: "...the greater my guilt in your eyes, the more whole, the more totally assumed, the greater will be my freedom" (84). Imprisonment, as society's most radical recognition of guilt, represents the ultimate affirmation of Genet's "fringe" status: "[p]rison offers the same sense of security to the convict as does a royal palace to a king's guest... [t]he prison surrounds me with a perfect guarantee" (87). Ironically, incarceration of the convicted thief serves to secure both society against Genet, and Genet against society.

An inextricable, yet paradoxical link is drawn between freedom and morality, and constitutes the critical theme of *The Thief's Journal*. Whereas, in a conventional sense, adherence to a moral order is indicative of freedom, it is our moral preoccupations, the author suggests, that preclude individual freedom:

Starting from the elementary principles of morality and religion, the saint arrives at his goal if he sheds them... saintliness is individual. Its expression is original... its sole basis is renunciation. (209)

However, in connecting these concepts, Genet neither confirms, nor contradicts status quo perceptions of morality and/or freedom. Rather, he sets them up as his point of departure. Thus, Genet pursues saintliness from a morally neutral state—a “state of moral perfection.” Genet broadens the scope of morality, expands its parameters, and encompasses within it the full spectrum of the human condition to include the wretched, the vile, and the reproachful:

The beauty of a moral act depends upon the beauty of its expression... Sometimes the consciousness with which we have pondered a reputedly vile act, the power of expression which must signify it, impel us to song. (23–24)

From this perspective, Genet is able to challenge the reader to rethink his/her stock morality.

Genet interprets his existence through the invocation of many familiar themes found in the Bible, classical mythology, and classical literature. Employing a rich variety of references, metaphors, and similes, Genet lures the reader into the reconciliation of the real and surreal. He has metamorphosed vileness into beauty, evil into virtue, and abjection into stateliness, in a manner which may appeal to the reader's aesthetic sense, yet may simultaneously offend his/her moral sense. If the reader is moved (whether excited or appalled) by *The Thief's Journal*, it is confusing (and perhaps somewhat threatening) as to whether one's emotion is stirred by Genet's wretched past, his morally neutral description of that past, or his seductive interpretation of it.

This confusion may arise, at least in part, from Genet's use of three distinct voices. The first of these captures our attention by the skillful use of storytelling and dialogue to illustrate the intensity and intimacy of his experiences:

Stilitano [his lover] was big and strong... a large part of his power over me... lay in the spittle he passed from one cheek to the other and which he would sometimes draw out in front of his mouth like a veil. (17)

A second voice emerges as Genet interrupts the story/dialogue with relatively objective commentary:

Mine will never have the unctuousness or color of his. It will merely be spun glassware, transparent and fragile. (17)

Genet frequently interrupts with a third voice to impose a purely subjective (often seductive) interpretation onto both story/dialogue and commentary:

I used to wonder what could possibly be hidden behind that veil of saliva, what the secret meaning was of the unctuousness and whiteness of his spittle, which was not sickly but, on the contrary, thrillingly vigorous, able to stir up orgies of energy. (168–169)

It is this interpretive voice that is perhaps most intriguing and, at the same time, most disturbing.

The bifurcation of human experience into the "good" and "bad," the "right" and "wrong," is irrelevant in the context of Genet's work, insofar as his message is to abolish these arbitrary preoccupations and to recognize that intensity and depth of emotional phenomena are universal. It is perhaps Genet's greatest accomplishment that he has effectively demonstrated the breadth of this fundamentally human quality.

To the interested reader, I would highly recommend others of Genet's works, including *Miracle of the Rose* (1966), *Our Lady of the Flowers* (1963), *Querelle* (1974), *Funeral Rites* (1969), *The Balcony* (1958), and *The Screens* (1962). In addition, Jean-Paul Sartre's *Saint Genet* (1963) is an exemplary exploration of the complexities of Genet. ❖

REVIEW

Brian Fawcett, *Public Eye: An Investigation into the Disappearance of the World*.
Harper/Collins, 1990.

It is impossible for one to read Fawcett's latest book of short stories, *Public Eye: An Investigation into the Disappearance of the World*, without becoming profoundly aware of the fact that every living human being is responsible for what is wrong with Planet Earth. What makes it even worse is that no one seems to give a damn about it.

This planet is inhabited by millions of self-centred individuals who cry out, "Why should we give a damn? Even if we wanted to, there's nothing we can do about it. So why waste our energy on that which we cannot control—that which we cannot change?"

To quote Fawcett,

"We've lived through the greatest period of wealth in human history. What are we giving people for it? This should be paradise, and it ain't—and I get angry at that. How can anyone be so blasé about the fact that the world is disappearing on itself?... People aren't happy, people aren't satisfied. What have we got with this wealth? People burn two thirds of the wealth of this planet up and for that we're given television sets and Hostess Twinkies. Jeez, we ought to be ashamed of ourselves."

Unfortunately, we aren't. Shame no longer appears to be a part of our global vocabulary. We have become so self-centred that we no longer care or want to care about what happens around us. We are rapidly becoming a cultureless people—people deprived of individual thought and identity.

From his years of experience as a community planner for the city of Vancouver, Fawcett discovered what people were doing and why, as well as how scary things could get when people knew there was something amiss with the world without knowing what it was. He also discovered how each of us contributes to our own ultimate destruction. It is from that awareness that the stage for *Public Eye* is set.

Public Eye utilizes a sort of split-screen format to juxtapose the fictional accounting of the sleazy power wielded by the Akron Design Centre with a long-running commentary on the action. This unique style enables the reader to embark on a literary journey wherein the "massive and systematic deceptions and manipulations of contemporary life that are being perpetrated all around us" are exposed in a way that even a novice could comprehend.

Fawcett's Akron Design Centre is typical of the intellectual think-tanks that blatantly control every aspect of the decision making processes within Western socio-cultural structures. Using mass media to eradicate human thought and individuality,

these think-tanks serve to propagate Orwellian beings who are malleable according to the dictates of society as a whole.

Before it's too late, *Public Eye* challenges us to recognize the deliberate suppression of all potential human thought and experience by greedy, self-centred corporate capitalists. It reveals how we are being subjected to an inhuman, artificial, "viral" intelligence that in spite of its claims, is dedicated to the destruction, not the preservation of humanity.

Despite what much of this book suggests, Fawcett does not provide us with any equitable solution for the global deception that threatens to destroy humanity. He offers no solution for the issue of cultural sterility that is engulfing society as a whole. All we are presented with through his satirical wit and uncanny insight is the horrifying awareness that all humans are equally responsible for the sorry state which the earth is presently in. But is such awareness enough?

Whether public or private, awareness in itself merely serves to identify the problems without affording any viable solution. Without qualifying awareness with some sense of direction, corporate capitalists will continue to effectively manipulate our every move while leaving us out in the cold. As another critic put it, "Rome is burning and we're not even fiddling; we're just watching the video." In all fairness, though, anyone with slightly more than a modicum of intelligence will realize that no single solution exists for what ails twentieth-century man.

In *Public Eye*, Fawcett's premise is to encourage us to pull our heads out of the sand and wake us up to reality so that collectively we stand a chance of resolving the crisis that is before us. ❖

REVIEW

Stephen Duguid (ed), *Yearbook Of Correctional Education 1990*.
Burnaby: Institute for the Humanities, Simon Fraser University, 1990.

The 1990 *Yearbook of Correctional Education*, assembled by the Simon Fraser University's Institute for the Humanities Prison Education Program and the Correctional Education Association, and edited by Stephen Duguid, provides a well-balanced collection of works describing, analyzing, critiquing, applauding, and forecasting the role of correctional education and its facilitators around the globe. The diversity of opinions and perspectives affords the reader a broad selection of short articles discussing some of the major problems and challenges facing education programs in prisons. While the papers are informative, and for the most part progressive, the collection presented some very disturbing trends for this reader. As a prisoner involved with the Simon Fraser University Prison Education Program, I found that some of the problems which reduce the program's efficiency can be found within the methodological orientation of the program. This orientation comes through clearly in a number of papers contained within this book. While not trying to take away from the necessity and great value of the work that is being done by educators in prison, I hope that this critique will not only familiarize the reader with a book that must be read by anyone interested in education and corrections, but will add to the discussion these papers present, from the prisoner's perspective.

With the exception of William Forster's *The Higher Education Of Prisoners*, and a few one-liners sprinkled throughout the book, the subjects of this great debate (the prisoners themselves) are unheard. As high-quality papers by prisoners involved in prison education were available—two were presented at the 1990 CEA's 45th Anniversary Conference—their exclusion from this work takes a great deal away from its potential value. Further, this "Freudian slip" reveals the continuity of a disturbing fact impeding the success of correctional educators. While there is a lot of talk about the necessity of prisoner participation in the design and implementation of educational programs, it remains just that: a lot of talk. The very process of making decisions *about* prisoners, not *with* prisoners is as humiliating, demeaning, and counterproductive as the prison environment condemned by most of the writers. As is typical, the perspectives and presentations of prisoners are seen to be eccentric and frivolous. When this attitude is presented by the prison bureaucrats and guards, it reinforces the powerlessness prisoners suffer. When this attitude comes from those espousing neutrality—here to empower us through education—it shows their hypocrisy and reinforces the feeling that no one will ever accept prisoners as "real" human beings. This yearbook, for the most part, treats prisoners as misguided children.

As Michel Gastonguay, one prisoner who presented to the CEA Conference, would say, it reinforces the idea that prisoners require “the benevolent intervention of the professional.”

Throughout the *Yearbook of Correctional Education*, there is repeated acknowledgement that prisons are social institutions that dehumanize, desocialize, and breed fear and hatred amongst the people held, and even those who work within prisons. Remember that the authors are, for the most part, well-respected academics, experts in their fields, and have a great deal of practical experience inside of prisons. In spite of this, though—rather than calling for the improvement of the environmental conditions frustrating their attempts to “correct” people, destroying their clients, and jeopardizing the community—all of the authors work with the assumption that “this is how it is, this is how it will be.” By doing so, these professionals ignore their responsibility to the community at large, to their clients, and quite often to themselves—by accepting that which should be unacceptable.

As most prisoners and many educators will verify, prisons do not allow for what education demands—an environment conducive to learning, growth, and personal empowerment. While their attempts to work within the existing system are indeed commendable, these authors, for the most part, appear to have neglected the crux of their goal. If prison environments breed the very evils that are allegedly the targets of the correctors, should there not be any attempt to change that environment—before trying to commence the correcting? As Stephen Duguid himself asserts in his well-done piece, “Education for What?”:

We can assist this process [empowering prisoners] immeasurably by bringing as much of the school, college, or university into the prison as we can, including standards, curriculum, and systems of governance. Indeed, such an importation of school into prison should perhaps be a prerequisite of prison education programming. (124)

I would suggest even beyond this recognition that the prison environment does not lend itself well to the personal empowerment of students or of any prisoner, and that it works against one of the main objectives of imprisonment, rehabilitation. What is wrong with prison programs is not content, not delivery, not orientation, but the fact that programs are being offered inside our prisons as they exist.

Another trend throughout the *Yearbook* is the reliance on correcting the behaviour, personality, attitude, or life experiences of prisoners. What seems on the surface to be the very goal that correctors should be aspiring to, on further analysis reveals the inequitable power relations between prisoner and educator in most contemporary programs. The SFU/PEP can and should be applauded for its maintenance of a program which attempts at every turn to treat prisoners as real people; sadly, however, it is an exception rather than a rule. Aside from the cognitive development that occurs through education, there is an essential need for prisoners to be treated like human beings first, students second and prisoners in the last case. Nothing furthers the aims of education and personal empowerment more than equi-

table power relations within teacher/student relationships. As George Kneller asserts:

Above all, the teacher must accept the principle that the highest educational goal [is] man's search for himself. The talented teacher knows how to avoid officiousness in dealing with the educational development of a student. As Fallico implies, a teacher must not stand in the way of a "healthy existentialist crisis." He must not present palliatives, psychological cures, or other expedencies at the expense of autonomy. First comes a confession of ignorance, and a realization of one's moral and intellectual unconsciousness, much as Socrates advocated. This is followed by an examination of oneself and one's life purpose, including one's judgement of values in life and the choices that need to be made. Education can play its part by filling in the gaps necessary for the fulfillment of these purposes; it is not a mold into which the purpose of the student must be fitted. (Kneller 1958)

It cannot be stressed enough that prisoners, considering their hostility towards authority, coercion, and manipulation, must be allowed to learn; they can not be forced to do so. Being "corrected" is an act of coercion, or so it is seen by contemporary prisoners. Whether coercion is intended or actual is irrelevant. The fact that prisoners perceive it must be focussed upon, as these perceptions will block or facilitate the educational process. As David Lusted writes:

Knowledge is not produced in the intentions of those who believe they hold it, whether in the pen or in the voice. It is produced in the process of interaction, between writer and reader at the moment of reading, and between the teacher and learner at the moment of classroom engagement. Knowledge is not the matter that is offered so much as the material that is understood. To think of fields or bodies of knowledge as if they are the property of academics and teachers is wrong. It denies an equality in the relations at moments of interaction and falsely privileges one side of the exchange, and what that side "knows," over the other. Moreover, for critical culture producers to hold this view of knowledge carries its own pedagogy, an autocratic and elite pedagogy. It's not just that it denies the value of what learners know, which it does, but that it misrecognizes the conditions necessary for the kind of learning—critical, engaged, personal, social—called for by the knowledge itself. (Lusted 1986)

If these propositions are true for education in general, they are tenfold true in the context of correctional education. There is a need for strategies which will promote and allow for normal relations between prisoner/students and teachers. To take the choice away, to force people into educational programs, as Sylvia McCollum recommends (McCollum 1990:159), is to condemn students to programs that will have few good—any possible many harmful—effects due to the inherent coercion involved.

Aside from the above concerns, I found some very good information, some very sound perspectives, and sensed an earnest desire for the most part to have some of the words become realities. I was impressed by some of the authors who were willing to break with the traditional reliance on "correcting" prisoners at all costs.

However, the effort is all for naught unless some of these great ideas manage to articulate themselves behind the grey stone and barbed-wire perimeters of prisons. Experience suggests that this effort must start with correcting prisons first, as every moment prisoners are in the prison environment, instead of the academic environment, they fight a losing battle to retain what they have learned.

Most educators would agree that students must be given real participatory roles to play in their education, equality in their relations, and the opportunity, not the imperative, to develop. So much of the correctional process ignores some of the main tenets that true education, and thus empowerment, rest upon. A little less theory and a whole lot more praxis are needed if this book is to truly be of value to anyone but the theoreticians. And that would be a crime. ❖

REFERENCES

- Kneller, G. 1958. *Existentialism and Education*. New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc.
- Lusted, D. 1986. "Why Pedagogy?" *Screen* 27 (Sept–Oct 1986).
- Duguid, Stephen, (ed). *Yearbook Of Correctional Education 1990*. Burnaby: Institute for the Humanities, Simon Fraser University.

REVIEW

P.J. Murphy, *Reconstructing Beckett:
Language for Being in Samuel Beckett's Fiction*.
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990.

Amor intellectualis quo Murphy se ipsum amat.

So Samuel Beckett begins his justification of the expression "Murphy's mind" in his 1938 novel *Murphy*, in which Murphy is revealed as split into two parts—body and mind.

"Somehow the 'confinement' of the 'he' in the sense of incarceration must be reconciled with the sense of confinement as a labouring for the birth of another being." So Peter Murphy brings his *Reconstructing Beckett* to an end, with Samuel Beckett stirring stillborn in the perplexing quest to give being to his fictional other(s), perhaps to overcome the split of body and mind his character Murphy seems to accept.

That Peter Murphy, oftentimes editor of *Prison Journal*, should publish a critical work on Samuel Beckett is no surprise. His friends and students recognize an obsession paroled at last; our readers are no doubt happy for him. But why should *Prison Journal* bother to review this work intended for specialists? There is the obvious: Murphy has left us for other pastures, less verdant but better funded. Members of the *Prison Journal* community, writers and readers, publishers and supporters, all wish to thank him for doing his time well and not writing his memoirs instead. But there are other reasons, and to these I turn to avoid the maudlin.

Samuel Beckett wasn't just any writer; he was the writer of the postwar world. Jokes are actually made about *Waiting for Godot* in popular sitcoms and prisons. This is fame unto death, and since that great play we have been Waiting for Sam-to-Die. As Murphy points out, critical opinion of Beckett's work hasn't changed much since he was labelled an "absurdist." Virtuosi of the word, deconstructionists and the like, have also subjected Beckett's prose to wordplay; they claim him as one of them, a "virtuoso of the word." A mirror is a wonderful thing, but Murphy doesn't like reflections.

Murphy says Beckett's work is an answer to the question of art and its relationship to life, an approach that foregoes the easy answer that art exists for its own sake. Beckett isn't retreating; he isn't merely going on; he isn't embracing the "art of failure," the art that says words cannot embrace the world beautifully. Murphy shows Beckett embracing the "art of hunger," words that want to integrate word and world, self and fiction. This is the incarcerated self, 'he,' labouring to be, to actually find a voice articulated on the need of the world. Murphy arrives at this primarily through a very close reading of Beckett's prose, to which I can only refer the reader. But he cuts to the heart of the matter when he places Beckett firmly within the

project of the post–World War I avant-garde (Dadaism, Surrealism). Echoing Peter Burger’s *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, Murphy sees the project of reintegrating art and life (to make life art and art life) as fundamental to Beckett, who attempts to do just that by “bringing life to his art,” to give the fictional world ontological status.

It doesn’t take a Beckett scholar to recognize that Murphy has turned Beckett criticism on its head (in its grave). Where critics see formalism, Murphy sees a new realism; where they see the human voice propelled toward empty space by the arbitrariness of words, he sees the human voice drawn toward the source of need in language and being. To make the fictional real, to give life to the imagination—this is Beckett’s work.

It holds out the possibility of a new conception of humanism that might allow for the creation of fictions required to release us from many of the useless and crippling fictions of family and state, self and other, language and literature that we have trapped ourselves within. Seeing the ‘mess’ makes it much less ‘wretched’ and, as Beckett said, offers us our only chance of renovation.

What strikes me about Murphy’s Beckett is that Beckett’s fictional ‘(s)he,’ incarcerated but labouring to be born, emulates and guides the struggle of the imprisoned to be free. Listen to Murphy in the first editorial of the first *Prison Journal*:

For, although no world is so explicitly bounded by language as a prison—a ‘sentence’ marks the entrance, and ‘parole’ the exit—words in this world do undeniably refer to particular individuals. All of us are part of the ‘prison-house of language’ and the necessary ‘jail-breaks’ (Margaret Atwood) cannot be effected without a sense of community, of common goals.

It is the mark of the new humanism that Murphy reveals stirring still in Beckett, the goal of community and common purpose, that still persists in stir (a last prison pun for ‘the Murf’). In his *Beckett* and our *Prison Journal*, giving voice is the first step to liberating praxis. The arcane can be an exemplar for the everyday, and that is why the *Prison Journal* community must care for this book.

This review cannot conclude without a final cheap shot. A last piece of sentimental prison farewell. Murphy is on parole, his sentence apparently drawing to a close. This book has given voice to Murphy; the fictional character “Murphy’s Beckett” has convinced this reader of his ontological status. But Murphy, what about him? Out of prison now, has he convinced us of his status? Will ‘he’ be revoked by the unsentimental fictions of the state—the parole board or the tenure committee? If so, will he flatten out his sentence and become that fictional character “Beckett’s Murphy,” divided in two, body and soul, inside and outside, suffering “a dreary ooze of being into doing”? ♦

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRESS BEHIND THE WALLS

Around the globe, there are a variety of movements gearing up for the struggle to provide education to prisoners. This trend is very encouraging for those who have experienced what education can bring to a prisoner—simply, freedom. Although some prisoners find that education makes serving time more difficult—due to the inherent contradictions that exist between the theory of justice and its practice—education still affords men and women an opportunity to examine and alter their perspectives in an otherwise stagnant and coercive environment. The following outlines some of the major incentives being undertaken. The importance of the role of the prisoner in these organizations, in their development, and in their facilitation can not be stressed enough. Without prisoner involvement, these great ideals will likely end up as have other prison programs, alienating their “clients” with coercive and anti-democratic approaches. But it is the responsibility of prisoners to find appropriate roles within these programs. To this end, several new opportunities for participation have been or are being formed that may provide prisoners with just the opportunities we have been seeking.

*The United Nations, The Economic and Social Council
and the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly*

The first incentives to be considered are five resolutions adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held in Havana, Cuba, in August and September of 1990. The following brief does not do justice to the full extent of this effort, as it has been edited for brevity's sake. For further information, contact International Council for Adult Education - 720 Bathurst Street, Suite 500, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5S - 2R4.

The first resolution asserts the Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners, which are defined in a Statement of Basic Principles and relate to: prisoners' inherent dignity and value as human beings, the banning of discrimination, respecting prisoners' religious and cultural beliefs, maintaining their well-being during captivity, respecting the various international agreements regarding human rights for prisoners, permitting participation in cultural and educational programs, abolishing or restricting of the use of solitary confinement, facilitating meaningful and remunerative employment, ensuring adequate and equitable health services, and reintegrating prisoners into the community upon release.

The second resolution on Social Aspects of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in the Context of Social Development calls for the use of education in training persons involved in the criminal justice and crime prevention fields as a means of bringing about change to the way in which the problems of crime and criminals are managed. Further, this resolution calls on the Secretary-General of the United Nations to undertake an active role in ensuring that relevant resources are made

available to countries with the aim of encouraging and assisting change.

The third resolution on Prison Education, adopted by the Economic and Social Council, affirms the right of all people to education, as detailed in various international agreements. Further, it stresses the necessity for adequate training and education for persons dealing with juveniles, and recommends that juveniles themselves be afforded comprehensive education and training opportunities. This resolution also asserts the need for greater emphasis on the reintegration of prisoners into the community, and the role of education in their resettlement. This resolution calls upon the established international organizations and non-governmental concerns to jointly become active in realizing these objectives. Finally, it asks the Secretary-General of the United Nations to make resources and opportunities available for conferences and meetings to facilitate these goals, and requests that he make his own recommendations to the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control at its twelfth session.

The fourth resolution on Education, Training and Public Awareness in the Field of Crime Prevention, also adopted by the Economic and Social Council, recommends that, "the United Nations deal in a practical and operational way, in the context of its policies, standard-setting and clearing-house functions, and central co-ordination role, with the contemporary problems of the international community in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice..." The resolution further calls upon the Secretary-General to make the necessary steps to facilitate these recommendations.

The fifth, and final resolution on Criminal Justice Education, put forth by the Third Committee of the General Assembly, for the General Assembly, recommends the aforementioned strategies for dealing with the international problem of crime and criminal justice systems, including putting greater resources toward quality education and training of prisoners and professionals, coordinating research projects and their results on an international level, and calling for greater adherence by United Nations Member-States to the existing charters and agreements. This resolution also requests of the UN Secretary-General that he facilitate this process with adequate resources, through elevating this issue's profile, and by personally encouraging Member-States of the United Nations to abide by the resolutions.

These resolutions cover many of the essential areas of concern to prisoners, and are central to most disturbances within prisons. As such, they may provide substantial changes to prisons globally. However, this will take some doing, considering the disregard the worst offending nations have for the agreements that they sign, and further, the difficulty in actualizing such ideals from the top down. Prison systems have withstood countless attempts by reformists throughout the ages, and have escaped with only cosmetic changes in how we cage other people. The fact that the act of imprisonment itself is a blatant disregard for human dignity—that it debilitates prisoners and is environmentally incompatible with learning, growth, and change—has been all but ignored in these resolutions. We don't need better prisons, we need fewer prisons. We don't need to cure prisoners as much as we need to cure the social morass that causes crime. Continued band-aid attempts at cleaning up our human refuse should be concentrated on addressing the causes, not the consequences of the problem. That said, there are a number of international organisations fulfilling some of the roles outlined in the resolutions. It should be noted that while

some of these have existed for some time, there are several new groups which have the potential to make some of the far-reaching ideals set out in these resolutions.

International Centre for the Study of Education in Penal Systems (ICEPS)

One of the most interesting and promising organizations in the field of prison education at the time of writing is the ICEPS. Although this organisation is still in its formative stages, a number of ideals have been tentatively proposed as objectives for the Centre. These follow on the heels of the UN resolutions focussing on education in penal systems. With the goals of utilizing existing national and international organizations, introducing new teaching and communications technologies, and coordinating research- and information-sharing internationally, ICEPS hopes to create a global network for the energies, ideas, and resources of those pursuing like ideals. Thus this organisation promises to become central to the now-mounting efforts to offer quality educational and training opportunities to prisoners and correctional practitioners alike. This much-needed hub for the educative effort will hopefully bring some refreshing cohesiveness to a chaotic frontier. For further information, contact Stephen Duguid, Department of Continuing Studies, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC, Canada, V5A 1S6.

Penal Reform International (PRI)

Founded in London (UK) in November 1989, this organisation resembles what is called for by the resolutions of the United Nations, with a focus on penal reform. Similar to ICEPS, PRI is a non-governmental body that aims to further reform through international collaboration and cooperation. PRI claims the following mandate:

1. the development and implementation of international human rights instruments with regard to law enforcement, prison conditions and standards;
2. the elimination of unfair and unethical discrimination in all penal measures;
3. the abolition of the death penalty;
4. the reduction of the use of imprisonment throughout the world; and
5. the use of constructive non-custodial sanctions which encourage social reintegration while taking into account the interests of victims.

Again, as ICEPS, PRI promises to provide a hub for those seeking to contribute to the present reform movement. For more information, contact the Secretariat: 169 Clapham Road, London, SW9 0PU.

Combined with the efforts of PEN, Amnesty International, the Society for the Reform of Criminal Law, and the International Centre for Criminal Law Reform

and Criminal Justice Policy, both ICEPS and PRI promise to assist in the international effort to create a more just world. Such efforts are necessary to provide the impetus for measurable changes to imprisonment on a global level. What this all means for prisoners, is that there is some hope that positive changes will be forthcoming. What these mean for society in general, is an improvement in our quality of life. Anyone with anything to contribute to these efforts, in particular, prisoners, should contact these organisations directly. ♦

POLITICAL PRISONERS: CASE STUDIES

CUBA

Elizardo Sánchez Santa Cruz is a forty-five-year-old former professor of philosophy at Havana University currently in prison for making public statements in defence of human rights.

On 6 August 1989, some twenty security agents arrived at his home in Havana in the early hours of the morning, searched the premises and the offices of the Cuban Commission of Human Rights and National Reconciliation (CCHRNR), of which he is president, and then detained him.

Elizardo was charged with "spreading false news with the aim of endangering the prestige or standing of the Cuban state." Following his trial on 17 November, 1989, Elizardo was sentenced to two years' imprisonment. He is now held at Combinado de Este prison in Havana.

He has been detained on several occasions, apparently for political reasons. He was arrested in September 1986 after denouncing human rights violations in Cuba to foreign journalists, and he was held without charge until his release in May 1987.

Please write brief and courteous letters appealing for the immediate and unconditional release of Elizardo Sánchez Santa Cruz to: Su Exelencia Comondante en Jefe Dr Fidel Castro, Presidente de la Republica, Ciudad de Havana, Cuba.

courtesy Amnesty International

THE PHILIPPINES

Benjamin Lazaro, born in 1960, is a scriptwriter. He is married with six children. His wife is a journalist who was working at the *Manila Standard*; however, mail sent to her there recently has been returned unopened.

Lazaro was abducted at the gate of St. Scholastica's College in Malate, Manila as he was leaving a performance of *Base Militar*, a play critical of US bases in the Philippines. The three unidentified armed men who seized him claimed to be military intelligence agents. Either a white Colt or a white Dodge was used: licence plate number EAV 846. The plate was reportedly registered at Legaspi City, Albay as part of the motor pool of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces.

Sources suggest that it is almost certain Benjamin Lazaro is dead. Appeals should request a full investigation of the abduction and information on his whereabouts and the conditions under which he is being held (if he is still alive). If the investigation establishes that he is dead, the Committee is seeking assurances that those responsible for the abduction will be identified and brought before a court to account for their actions.

Write to: Her Excellency Corazón Aquino, President, Malancang Palace, Manila, the Philippines. Copy 1 to: General Renato de Ville, Chief of Staff of the Armed forces of the Philippines, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City, the Philippines. Copy 2 to: His Excellency Ramón A. Diaz, Ambassador, Embassy of the Philippines, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K1P 5G4. (Minder: Per Brask, Winnipeg.)

courtesy Writers in Prison Committee

VIETNAM

Thich Tue Sy and Thich Tri Sieu are both in their mid-forties and former professors from the Buddhist Van Hanh University in Saigon. They were working together compiling an encyclopedia on Vietnamese Buddhism at the time of their arrest.

It is believed that they were arrested because the government feared their influence with intellectuals. The authorities considered them "reactionaries under the cloak of Buddhism" who had created an organization called the Front for Human Rights in Vietnam in an effort to "sow doubt and division among the people" and to overthrow the government.

At some point in 1989 Thich Sue Sy was moved from Z-30 camp in Xuan Loc to Camp Xuan Phuoc because it was feared his popularity with other prisoners would cause dissent. Camp Xuan Phuoc is located in a remote jungle area in Khanh Hoa province in Central Vietnam. Thich Tri Sieu remains at Z-30 in Xuan Loc in Dong Nai province and works in the translation room along with another of PEN's prisoners, Doan Quoc Sy.

courtesy Writers in Prison Committee

BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

Craig Hill is a thirty-seven-year-old prisoner serving a life sentence. He is currently incarcerated at Matsqui prison in British Columbia, Canada. Craig has been diagnosed as having Neuromuscular Dystrophy, which, during the last twelve years of his incarceration, has resulted in severe cerebral atrophy. There is no cure for Neuromuscular Dystrophy. It is terminal; its symptoms progressively worsen.

At the time of this writing, Craig is confined to a wheelchair, needing constant care and attention from prison hospital staff and those prisoners around him. His speaking capabilities are minimal, and his physical coordination for even the most basic movements is almost gone. Yet Craig struggles to maintain himself with as much dignity and respect as possible.

A number of applications have been made on Craig's behalf for Her Majesty's Royal Prerogative of Mercy (Sec. 751 of the Canadian Criminal Code). To date, however, these appeals for mercy have been denied by the Governor General's

office. Craig no longer poses any threat whatsoever to society, and the punishment he now suffers far surpasses that to which the courts sentenced him.

Appeals for Craig's release in accordance with Her Majesty's Royal Prerogative of Mercy should be directed to all members of Canadian Parliament, the Governor General's office, the Solicitor General's office, and the National Parole Board, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0P8.

Editors, *Prison Journal*

LETTERS

Letters have been edited for brevity.

Dear Sirs:

...Gentlemen, your publication is a beacon of sanity for me. The camp where I presently am imprisoned is the North Carolina Department of Corrections version of the Gulag. I have never seen conditions so appalling in a "corrections" facility. I use the term "corrections" facetiously in the extreme, for this is neither the intent nor purpose of "the System" here in the States. It is more correctly termed "the prison industry" for it is nothing more than a way to make money off the poor and oppressed, hence little is done to reduce the enormously high recidivism rate. More than 90 percent of the cons released from North Carolina Prisons are back within a year. This substantiates the general feeling among the more socially conscious in the States that we have regressed greatly from the ideals established by Thomas Jefferson and the framers of the United States Constitution. "Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" have become repression, oppression, and mass internment...

What really hurts me the most, makes me most bitter about the current Republican "regime," is the fact I served in the US Marine Corps as an infantryman, "defended" the outrageously idiotic economic policies of Ronald Reagan and George Bush for eight years of my life... The prisons here are filled with military veterans, and especially, many of the "Lifers" are combat vets. How insidious is a system that rewards the very people who risked life, limb—even sanity—to defend said system's "interests" (whether real, imagined, or maniacal) with Life Imprisonment?... I think this is a very intriguing subject that deserves to be addressed.

In chains but unbroken,
Jeffrey M. Eastwood
North Carolina, USA

30 June, 1990

Prison Journal:

I as a life prisoner in an American prison feel it is my duty to inform people all over the world of human rights violations occurring right here in the so-called civilized society of America.

There are security housing units and high security units throughout the American penal system that isolate inmates and deny them all social interaction with any persons.

From my personal experience what this entails is no religious programs unless an immediate family member dies, there are no recreational programs, you spend twenty-four hours a day in your cell unless you elect to go to yard and the so-called yard is a 26 x12 cement box with no type of recreational activities on said, you virtually walk in circles. I don't go out much. You can't have contact with your family on visits and you communicate on a phone behind a glass on said.

These programs are not to be confused with any General Population of any prison, they are not one and the same. Most people in Security housing units never see a mainline (General Population)...

There is a study that is of tantamount importance to all of the above and is of unexplainable importance for any persons of conscience to read: Thomas B. Benjamin and Kenneth Lux, "Solitary Confinement as Psychological Punishment" (*California Western Law Review*, Volume 13, 1977, 1065). I can't stress enough the importance of this study to any and all peoples...

I ask of you nothing but to be aware of this and do what you feel you can as a person or persons of conscience.

Thanks

Donald C. Johnson

California, USA

26 December 1990

Dear *Journal*:

Whatever assistance your Institute can lend in support of enclosed repatriation (back to Africa) petition would be greatly appreciated.

Umma Dumma
New Jersey, USA

[From the petition]

...first, recognizing petitioners' blood heritage [is] of African descent, and being both heirs and posterity of fore-parents who did not in any wise seek US citizenship but rather had said citizenship imposed upon them as they were forcibly taken from their national homelands in chains and much blood-letting, and made to perform servitude tasks; who also, then as today continue to be merciless subjects of (Caucasian) racism in both private and public sectors of US infrastructures; and, it being such adversities which have now led to petitioners' [being] condemned to a life of imprisonment inside US jails as disenfranchised (colonized) subjects; therefore, having sound minds and as "conscientious objectors" reject USA paper democracy, but [in] view [of] said "talons 'n' tentacles" of imperialism, submit this petition for ****REPATRIATION**** to any number of African states or nations, excluding South Africa or those countries engulfed in war...

Undersigned do seek and request full recognition as "Political Prisoners"—"Prisoners of War" classification, and that entitled status be granted.

Thank you all,
We the Undersigned

Umma Dumma
William E. Jones
Eugene Belton
Eugene F. Jones
Murray Whitfield ❖

Gerald Mance
Brian K. Northrop
Thomas McKeuol
Keith Bowman

NEWS ON NEWS

Prison Journal offers here a brief list of written materials produced by prisoners on a regular basis. It is often hard to find writings by prisoners, and we hope the following list will address this problem. Any other regular publications interested in being included in the listing in the next PJ should contact us as soon as possible.

ANTIGONE—Newsletter of the National Committee on US Corrections, \$2.00/year for prisoners; \$7.00/year for free world. Write to: P.O. Box 308, Farmington, MI 48332, USA.

CALIFORNIA PRISONER—Publishes *California Prisoner* and the *Inside Out* series of prison litigation books. Active in lobbying, too. Write to: Prisoners Rights Union, 1909 6th St., Sacramento, CA 95814, USA.

COALITION FOR PRISONERS' RIGHTS NEWSLETTER—This is one of the oldest publications directed at prisoners. Includes short articles as well as excerpts from prisoners' letters concerning legal matters and other issues. Write to: CPR, P.O. Box 1911, Santa Fe, NM 87501, USA.

CONVICTIONS—A well-produced magazine by prisoners, for prisoners and their people. Prisoners \$8.00/year; others \$10.00/year; Canadians +\$3.00. Write to: *Convictions*, P.O. Box 1749, Corvallis, OR 97339-1749, USA.

DANTE'S GAZETTE—A prisoners' consortium for justice. A publication for people who can't afford lawyers, it has lots of info on legal cases involving prison issues and conditions. Edited by TN prisoner Calvin Murray. \$2.00/prisoner. Make cheques out to Jackie Campbell at CVLP, 2930 N. 46th St., #107, Phoenix, AZ 87108, USA.

INCARCERATED CITIZEN'S CONGRESS—An underground newspaper concerning prison issues published every two months. Write c/o Melvin Miller, 1935 Chestnut St., Harrisburg, PA 17104, USA.

JOURNAL OF PRISONERS ON PRISONS—This journal contains papers written by prisoners regarding current issues affecting them. A good read full of good information. \$4.00 /year for prisoners. P.O. Box 779, Apt#11, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, T6G 2EO.

NON COMPOS MENTIS—A mini-magazine produced behind bars, available to outsiders. Contains horror stories, poetry, etc. Write to: K. Smith, #74481, Arizona State Prison Rincon, 10,000 S. Wilmot Rd., Tucson, AZ 85777, USA.

NUCLEAR RESISTOR—Covers those in prison for opposing nuclear weapons and nuclear power. Write to: POB 43383, Tucson, AZ 85733, USA.

PENT-UP OBSERVATIONS—This journal is edited by prisoners of the Arizona State prison system. They publish prison material and a wide variety of other socially conscious material as well. Donations to: Pent-up Press, POB 3490, University Station, Tucson, AZ 85722, USA.

PRISONERS' LEGAL NEWS—Produced by prisoners Ed Mead and Paul Wright, it covers legal news of Washington State. Donations of money and stamps needed to keep going. *Prisoners' Legal News*, P.O. Box 1684, Lake Worth, FL 33460, USA; in Canada, ABC, P.O. Box 6326, Station A, Toronto, Ont., M5W1P7, Canada. Letters and articles sent to Paul Wright, #930783, P.O. Box 5000, HC63, Clallam Bay, WA 98326, USA.

SOUTHERN COALITION ON JAILS AND JUSTICE—A quarterly newsletter concerning US prisoners and the death penalty. Write to: P.O. Box 120044, Nashville, TN 37212, USA.

SURVIVAL NETWORK NEWSLETTER—A bulletin of news on prisons, native news, labour, and anarchist struggles. Write c/o Arthur J. Miller, 302 N J St, #3, Tacoma, WA 98403, USA. ❖

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

JOHN ABBOT

Familiar with most of literature's genres, John has previously published in *Prison Journal* and other small magazines. He now lives in Japan, where he teaches English.

BOB ANDREWS

Incarcerated at Matsqui, Bob writes short stories and is currently completing a novel. A number of his stories have won prizes in the annual National Prison Arts Contests. When not writing, Bob pitches softball and works in the gymnasium.

DUO DUO

A modern Chinese poet and journalist, Duo Duo has been in exile since the Tiananmen massacre. Duo Duo is presently Writer-in-Residence at York University. His book *Looking out from Death* was published in 1990 by Bloomsbury Press, England.

TOM ELTON

On Quarantine Bay, Tom's first book of poetry, is to be published in fall 1991. A book of short stories is also near completion and should be forthcoming in 1992. Tom teaches GED to fellow prisoners at Matsqui penitentiary.

PETER GOSAU

Enrolled in the William Head SFU program, Pete is a first-time contributor. He is currently working hard to complete and publish a major work. Pete is also involved in the well-known William Head On Stage theatre group.

GAYLE HORII

The only woman serving a federal sentence in a male prison in Canada, Gayle is also working toward the completion of her undergraduate degree while at Matsqui. She writes and publishes critical essays and papers on the Corrections and Justice systems in many forms of the print media.

KIM CHI-HA

A Catholic activist who campaigned for human rights in South Korea. In the 1960s Kim Chi-Ha was sentenced to death, tortured, and imprisoned for many years. He became one of the most well-known political prisoners in the world. He has since been released and remains in South Korea.

WAYNE KNIGHTS

An SFU faculty member, Wayne has been heavily involved in prison education for the last fifteen years with no prospect of parole.

ERLE MACAULAY

Soon to be released from Matsqui, Erle is in his final year at SFU, undertaking an Honours Degree. He is currently co-editing a book of collected critical essays titled *Crisis in Corrections: Policies, Problems, and Prospects* for the Matsqui Prisoners' Justice Initiative, a group he chairs. The anthology is due for release in mid-1991.

DEBRA MACKENZIE-ROSE

Working toward her MA in criminology, Debra currently co-ordinates the SFU program at Matsqui. Debra is also devoted to assisting prisoners on their release and is on the Board of Directors of New Start, a Vancouver-based job assistance program for parolees and their families.

JACK MACINTOSH

Is Slavic Bibliographer at UBC Library. He and Tom McGauley are long-time students of Doukhobor history.

TOM MCGAULEY

Is a poet, tutor, and janitor in Burnaby.

DAVID MARTIN, JOHN HEIBNER, AND PAUL DAVIES

Are all incarcerated in England. Their work has been previously anthologized in *Prison Poets*, 1987. All three are first-time contributors to *Prison Journal*.

DR. PETER MURPHY

One of *Prison Journal's* founding editors, Peter coordinated the SFU off-campus programs at Matsqui and Kent prisons for more than a decade. Peter is currently teaching English at Douglas College, and is revising *Sentences and Paroles: Voices From The Pen*, an anthology of prison literature.

MARIANNE PAUL

Is a freelance editor and writer. Her fiction has appeared in *Western People*, *Potboiler*, and *High Profile*. Her most recent work is *When Words Are Bars*, is a comprehensive resource guide for prison literacy instructors.

GINA RAHMAN

Is a graduate student at SFU, currently completing her MA thesis in English.

CARMEN RODRIGUEZ

A Chilean exile, Carmen lives in Vancouver and teaches literacy at SFU. The selections of her writing included in this issue of *Prison Journal* are from her *Protracted War* collection.

THOMAS SHAND

Sentenced to death, Thomas Shand had that sentence commuted to life imprisonment. During his fourteen-year incarceration he worked to assist his fellow prisoners and improve prison living conditions. Paroled in 1984, Thomas was "disappeared" shortly thereafter.

THICH TUE SY

Imprisoned by Vietnam's communist government, Thich Tue Sy is incarcerated in a Vietnamese labour camp. Thich Tue Sy is a Buddhist monk and scholar, and is one of the writers about whom the Canada chapter of PEN is concerned. Contact with Thich Tue Sy has been severely limited and difficult to maintain.

DORIN TUDORIN

Once declared Romania's Public Enemy # 1 because of his political stance against that country's totalitarian regime. Tudorin's poetry and essays had to be smuggled out of Romania for publication. He was placed under house arrest, threatened with death, and later exiled. Tudorin currently lives in the US and edits *AGORA*, an underground magazine.

DALLAS WILLIAMS

Previously a student in the PEP program at William Head Institution, Williams is now living in Arcata, California, "in love and squalour." He remains "submerged in the embroilment of [his] personal melodrama, in the halfway house of habit."

CENTRE OF CRIMINOLOGY

AUG 20 1991

LIBRARY

896 1

PRISON JOURNAL ETHOS

Prison, like so many other of our social institutions, is a microcosm of society at large. We believe, no doubt in part because we are forced to live or have chosen to work within its boundaries, that it is a most potent and revealing one; and thence springs our desire to use *Prison Journal* to explore the world of imprisonment and to attempt to understand the psychological, social, and political relations which lead to its impasse.

The language of prison—lock and key, gate and pass, penitence and punishment—strains at the limits of metaphor and euphemism, just as the reality of the prison pushes against the walls of society's often too easy compartmentalizing of normality and deviance, legality and criminality. To put the case bluntly, the prison is a symbol of collective failure as a society; where better to look than into the complexities of this dark symbol for some insight into our shared plight?

Prison Journal has three aims: to provide an arena for the captive voices of those who are imprisoned, to be a spotlight of raw illumination on their condition, and to offer a forum to all those concerned with carrying out a serious examination of the phenomenon of the prison.

